# A fruit-

ful treatise of fa-

sting, wherin is de-

clared what ꝑ Christen

fast is, how we ought to

fast, & what ꝑ true vse

of fastyng is. Newe

lye made by

Thomas

Becon.

(.*.)

Mathew. vi.

When ye faste, be not

sad, as the hy-

pocrites are

# ¶ The sayinges of the holye Scripture.

Eccles. xxxvii.

BE not gredy in euery eating and be not to hasty vpon al meates. For excess of meats bringeth sickenes, & glotony cōmeth at the last to an vnmeasurable heate. Thorow surfet haue many one perysshed, but he that dyeteth him selfe tēperatly, prolongeth his life.

Luke. xxi.

Take hede to your selues, lest at any tyme youre heartes be ouercome wyth surfetyng and dronkennes.

Roma. xiii.

Make not prouision for the flesshe to fulfyl the lustes of it.

ii. Cor. vi.

Let vs gyue no occasion of euil, that our office be not euyl spoken of, but in al thynges let vs behaue oure selues as the ministers of God in much: pacyence in watchynges and fastynges.

Ephe. v.

Be not dronke with wyne, wherin is excesse, but be fylled wyth the spirit.

ii. Thes. v.

Let vs watche and be sober.

i. Peter. iiii.

Be ye sober and watche vnto prayer.

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# ¶ To the moste reuerende father in God, Thomas Archbishop of Caunterburie, Primate of al Englande and Metropolitane, Thomas Becon his humble and faythefull seruaunte wisheth the fauoure of God, longe lyfe, continuall healthe and prospe-rous felicitie.

OUre Lorde and alone sauioure Jesu Christe declareth in a parable of the gospell, that after a certayne housholder had sowed good seede in hys fielde, whyle hys seruauntes slepte, hys ennemye came and sowed tares amonge the wheate and wente hys waye, Thys housholder is Christ the lord. The good sede is ỳ children of god & gods worde, Math. xiii

The seruauntes that slepte are negligente Prelates and sleppe shepheardes, whiche watche not ouer the Lordes flocke. The enemy is the deuil. The tares are the childzen of the wicked, & errours and herelies, whiche Satan soweth in the heartes, of the vnbeleeuinge. Of this parable as wee
1. Peter. i. learne the goodnes of Christe toward vs in begetting vs a new, not of mortal sede but of immortall by the worde of God, whiche liueth and lasteth for euer, so like wyse learne we the malicioulnes of Sathan, whiche lyke a subtile serpente and olde enemye of mankinde, neuer sleepeth, but contynuallye walcketh vp and downe lyke a rorying lion, seking whom
1. Pete. v. he may deuoure and warely watcheth hys tyme to destroye, when-

soeuer

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souer anye occasion is geuen, be it neuer so little. Not wythoute a great cause therefore did our sauioure Christ exhort vs to watch and praye, that wee fall not into temptaciō. And albeit in this our frayle and synnefull lyfe manye occasions of doinge myscheife be offered to the ennemy on our behalfe such is our negligence and vncircumspecte behauyoure, yet the gratest occasion wherin Satan most gloryeth and soonest hopeth for the victorye, is when the shepheardes of Christes flocke giue no atēdaūce to theyr charge but lye sleepynge and snortyng, walowynge and welterynge in theyr pleasures, and suffer the wolf to scatter, yea to catch, to kil and to destroye the shepe. For al though the deuil leteth go no pro

Mat. xxvi.

Esaye. lvi.
Jhon. x.

ter, whiche maye moue him to do euil, but laieth hād on it streight waies, yet as the histories both of the holye scriptures & of credible writers do testify, he neuer sheweth him selfe so right a deuil noz so liuely setteth forth him selfe in his true colours, as whē ỹ guids of the Lozds flocke be either absent frō their shepe, oz els are negligēt in doig theyr dutie, I mean in pzeching gods word, & in writing godly bokes, if ned e require foz the confutacion of errores and heresies and foz ỹ establishment of gods holi religion. How sone had the people of Israel forgotten god and his goodnes toward the, after Moles was gone from them into the mount Sinai to talke with god & to receiue the lawe? Fel they not streightwaies

Exo. xxxii

from

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from the one and alone true and liuing god vnto abhominable idolatri, and worshipped a golden calfe? After the daies of Moses & of other godly Prophetes & preachers when wicked kinges reigned, and the preachinge of gods worde ceased, did not ẏ people of Israel fal to the worshipping of straũge gods, & made of the brasẽ serpẽt (which was but a sacramẽt and figure of Christe) a God and brent sacrifice vnto it? Certayne yeres before ẏ cõmig of christ into this world, into how mani sectes & sõdry religiõs were the Iewes deuided amõg thẽ selfs, whiche not wstãdig coũted thẽ selfes onli the people of god & hated al other naciõs, as abhominable Idolatours? Yea in the time of the Apostles, were ther not ẏ denied

Ihon. iii. iiii. re. xviii

Chriſte to be eyther true God or true man? How ſone wer the Corinthians and Galathians ſeduced by falſe Apoſtles, after that the mooſte worthye Apoſtle. S. Paul was departed from them? Howe many kynde of Heretikes roſe there vppe in the churche of Chriſte after the Apoſtles tyme? What greate and howe manye contentions both in ſermons, diſputacions and wrightinges had the holye Biſhops and godly fathers of the primatiue church vp the heretikes of theyr time for the maintenaunce of gods truth and for plucking vp ỹ enemies tares? Since the time ỹ thoſe verteous Biſhops and learned fathers of Chriſts church died, into howmany ſects haue the people ỹ profes god be deuided? The number of

ſectes

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sectes and counterfait religious, which yet liue vnder the Bishop of Rome, are almoste innumerable. Neither ceaseth Sathan eue in this most clear light of the gospel to play the right deuil, and to cast mistes before the eies of the vnfaithful. Into how many sects is Christendome yet deuided? Are not some called papists, some protestants, some Anabaptists, some sacramentaries? Whence come al these abhominacions but only from Sathan the author of al euil? Moreouer in what fielde, where good sede hath bene sowed, hath not the ennemie sowed his tares also? howe pestilentlye hathe he corrupted the pure wheate of goddes woorde wyth myngeling hys chaffe, drosse, darnell, cockell and tares, I mean the false glo-

ses,

les and vnsauery expositions of the papistes, Anabaptistes, and suche other sectaries: Howe wickedlye hathe hee peruerted the right vse of the sacramentes, specially the sacrament of Christes bodye and bloude: fastinge, prayer and almes deede, howe hathe he made thē to be abused: There is no pointe of Christen religion, which Sathan hath not attempted too ouerthrowe by hys ministers. And albeit as I said before the enemy laboureth at all times to sowe hys tares in the Lordes fielde, yet when the shepheardes of Christes flocke be negligēt in doing their dutye, kal a slepe and loke not to the Lordes field, then doth he most of al play his parte and bestoure him like a right deuil, as Salomon saythe. When

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the preahinge of gods word fai- Pro. xxix.
leth, the people pearishe. It ther
fore becommeth al men that ten-
der the glorye of God, but specy-
allye the Lordes Ministers to
loke diligentlye vnto theyr lords
fielde, and earnestly to take hede
that the enemy sow not his tares
amonge the Lordes wheate. If
any be sowed, it is their duti to la
boure euen to the vttermooste of
theyr power not with violence &
corporal armours (for the vse of
the seculare swearde is not com- Luk. xxii.
mytted to the preachers of gods Roma. xiii
worde, but to the temporal rulers
onlye to punysh malefactoures)
but with the swearde of the spirit
whyche is the woorde of God, Ephes. vi.
wyth prayers, supplycacions and
teares to weede theym oute.

The

The weapons of our warfar, saith S. Paule, ar not carnal thinges, but thynges myghty in god to cast down strong holds, wherwyth we ouerthrow cõsels, and euery hye thyng that exalteth it selfe agaynste the knowledge of God, and bryng into captiuity al imaginacion to the obedience of Chriſte. And in thys behalfe, I meane, in pluckinge vp the enemyes tares, and in purgyng the Lordes fielde that nothyng may growe therin but pure wheate, your both godly and vnreastfull paines (moſt reuerend father) ar well knowen in thys churche of England, and thanckefullye accepted of all faythfull Chriſten heartes, insomuch that very many do daylye render vnto God moſt humble and harty thankes

2. Cor. x.

for

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for the singuler and great benefites, whiche they haue receiued of him throwe your vertuous trauaile, in attayninge vnto the true knowledge of iustification, of the sacrament of Christes bodye and bloud, and such other holye misteries of oure profession. And al be it the deuill roare, the worlde rage, and the hipocrites swell at these your most Christen labours, whiche you willingly take for the glory of God and the edifyinge of hys congregacyon, yet as ye haue godlye beginne, so without ceasinge continew vnto the ende. By this meanes shal it come to passe, ỹ when the cheife shepheard shall appeare, ye shal receiue an incorruptyble crowne of glorye. 1. Peter. 5.

And forasmuch as so many as the

the Lord hath appoynted watch-
menne ouer hys flocke, oughte
euerye one accordynge to theyr
talente to folowe youre Godlye
example in weedynge oute er-
roures and plantynge true and
Christen opynyons in the hear-
tes of the people, seinge that Sa
than hath not a lyttle corrupted
the true vse of fastynge, whyche
beynge ryghtelye vsed doeth
hyghelye please God, and abu-
sed, displeaseth hym: I thoughte
it good agaynste thys tyme of
Lente, whyche of longe contyn-
uaunce hathe bene appoynted
to abstinence, to write somewhat
of fastynge, that myghte both o-
penne awaye too the faythefull
howe they maye faste to please
God, and also dysclose the falsse
manner of fastynge broughte in

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# The Epistle.

by the deuyl and his Ministers. And in thys my treatyse I haue fyrste declared what the Christen faste is, secondly how we oughte to fast, and thyrdly what the true vse of fastinge is. I toke thys laboure vppon me the more gladlye, partelye because no manne hytherto hath writen of that matter in oure Englyshe tonge, partlye to satysfye the heartye requestes of dyuers faithefull brethrene, whyche ceased not to requyre me in the Lordes name to wryghte some what, that myghte enstructe theym in the true vse of fastinge. The matter, I graunt, requyreth a woorke manne of riper iudgemente, and more exercysed in the Lordes harueste then I am, whyche myghte according to the worthynesse of the matter,

The Contentes of thys boke.

haue

haue set it forth pleasauntly and learnedly, but seing no mā hath hitherto take it in hād, I thought it my part not to deny the godlye requestes of the brethrē, but gladly to bestowe vpon them what so euer the Lord hath geuen me in thys behalfe.

Thys treatyse what so euer it is, I your humble and faythfull seruaunt, not hauyng otherwyse wherwyth to testify the thankfulnes of my hart toward your most honorable Lordship, for the manyfold benefytes whych ye haue bountifully bestowed vpon me, do dedicate to your name, moste humblye beseechynge you accorde to your accustomed gentlenesse to take in good part this my rude and grosse worke, whych to polyshe and to make nete (if habylytye

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litle had serued) shortnes of time wolde not suffer,

God, whose honoure you most desirouslye seke, moughte vouchsafe to preserue youre grace, in continuall healthe and prospe-rous felicitie vnto the glo-rye of his mooste blessed name, and the profyt of hys holy con-gregacyon.

Amen.

B.I.

# ¶ A treatyse of Fastinge.

## What the true and Christen faste is.

## ¶ The. i. Chapter.

The diffynicyon of ỹ true fast.

THe true and Christen fast is freely and willingelye to abstaine not only from al kind of meates and drynckes, but also from all those thynges, wherein the flesshe hathe pleasure and delectacion, whiche abstinence or forbearing of meates, drynckes and other plesures, wherein the outward man deliteth, riseth either of an hearte contryte and sorowefull for the synnes committed against god, or elsse of a minde feruentlye geuen to godlinesse.

The Fast of the Fathers of ỹ olde lawe.

That thys is a true diffinicion of the Christen faste, it maye bee easelye

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eaſelye proued oute of the holye ſcryptures. Fyrſte to whome is it vnknowen, that when the holye menne in tymes paſte faſted, theyr maner was, ſo long as the faſte continued, to abſtaine from al kinde of meates and drinckes and from all pleaſures wherein the fleſhe deliteth, and wholye to gyue them ſelues (all worldelye affaires ſette aparte) to godlye exercyſes, as to the heartye and vnfayened lamentynge of theyr ſynnes, wherewyth to much vnkindelye they hadde offended theyr Lorde God, and prouoked hys fearſe wrathe and vengeaunce to fall on them: to feruente prayer and diligente calling on the name of God for turnyng awaye hys heauye dyſpleaſure from

Spyritual exercyſes in ỳ tyme of faſting.

from theym, and for remission of
theyr synnes thorowe faith in the
holy sacrifice to come of that blef-
fed seede of the woman, which by
hys one and alone oblacion they
beleued, shulde reconcile manne-
kinde to God the father, pacifye
his wrathe, and make him a mer-
cyfull Lorde: to the hearinge and
readinge of goddes worde, to the
comforting of one another, to the
studie of amendemente of life, to
the prouision makynge for the
poore, to the redresse of abuses in
y^ common weale, to the planting
of true godlines, and abolishing
of all wicked and straunge rely-
Joel. i. ii. gion. Of thys maner of fastinge
speaketh the Prophete. when he
saithe, halowe ye a fast, meaning
that they whiche faste, shoulde in
the tyme of theyr fasting occupy
them

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them selues in spirituall and not in worldly exercises, or elsse is it no faste before God.

## The.ii. Chapter.

THis abstinence or forbearing of meates dyd alwayes con= Judi. xx.
tinewe at the least one whole day without receiuinge of anye corporal sustenaince, many times ii. or iii. daies, as the historyes of the holye scripture teach vs. The Israelits, whē they sawe so great a multitude of their people slain of the Beniamites in the battell, wente vp and came vnto Bethel where the arke of the appoynte= ment of God was in those dayes, wepte, sate there praying before the lord, and fasted the same day vnto euen, and offered burntoffe rinnges and peace offeringes be= i. Reg. vii.
fore the Lorde. Again, when the

Israelites gathered together at Mizpha, lamentiug their sinnes and prayinge vnto the Lorde for healpe againste the Philistines, they fasted the whole daye. So likewise did Dauid and thei that were with him, when they heard, that Saule and his sonnes were slaine in battell. Nehemiah fasted two dayes together or moo. For hee saide, as it is written of hym. I sate me downe and wept, and mourned certaine daies and fasted and praied before the god of heaue. We reade that Quene Esther and her Maidens wyth all the Iewes that were founde at Susan, fasted thre dayes and three nightes together, and dyd neyther eate nor dryncke. Moses, Elias and Christe fasted forty dayes and as manye nightes wyth-

1.Reg.i.

Elias .i.

Esther.iii

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wythoute receiuinge of anye corporall foode, but suche fastes are not to be practised, for asmuch as they are maruelous and past the boũdes of mens nature, and are done onlye by the vnsearcheable power and mightie worcking of God in few of his creatures. But the common manner of fastinge among the true godly was, when they did faste, to abstaine from al meate the whole daie til nighte, that they mighte the more freelye gyue theyr minde to spiritual exercises, and at night to take some refection moderatli yea and that with thanckes geuing. And on thys manner as some fasted but one or .ii. dayes together, so some fasted manye, euerye one as they were moued by the spirit of God, and as occasyon requyred.

Daniel. x. We reade that the Prophete Daniel fasted thus thre weekes together. Hys wordes are these: I Daniel mourned for the space of thre weekes, so that I had no liste to eate breade, as for flesh and wine there came none wythin my mouthe. No, I did not once annoynte my selfe, till the whole thre wekes were oute. The scripture testifieth, that the vertuous womā Judith fasted al the daies of her lyfe, excepte the sabbothes and new moones & the solempne dayes, that the people of Israell kepte. Likewise reade we of Anna the Daughter of Phanuell, wyych departed not from the temple, but serued god with fastings and praiers night and daye. On this maner did the Apostles after Christes ascension & many other godlye

Judi. viii.

Luke. ii.

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godlye menne in the primatyue church fast, So that their custom was on that daye that they dyd fast, to eat nothing til night, but to occupy them selues about such godlye exersyes, as here to fore are mencioned.

## The .iii. Chapter

AND as the godlye menne in the tyme of theyr fasting did abstayne from meate and drincke, so dyd they from al other thynges that myghte delyte the flesche, and be haued them selues outwardlye according to the sorowe and trouble of their hearte inwardlye. Oute of a mourning and sorowefull hearte dyd spring outwarde yea and those vnfayened tokens of sorowe and mournynge. For wee hearde before, that when Daniell fasted three

wekes

weekes, and prayed vnto the Lorde hys God, although he did eate bread euerye nyghte for the comforte of hys weake body, yet he neyther eate flesh, nor dronck wyne, nor yet once anoynted hym
Daniel. x. selfe. And in a nother place he sai
Daniel. ix. eth: I turned me vnto God the Lorde for to praye, and to make myne intercession wyth fastyng,
Jonas. iii. sakcloth and ashes. The people of Niniue, when they hearde the preachynge of Jonas, whyche threatened them and theyr cytye destruccion after fortye dayes, repented, beleued God, and proclaymed fastyng, and arayed the selues in sackeclothe, as well the greate as the small of them. And when the tidyngs came vnto the king of Niniue: he also arose out of his seate, & dyd his apparel of

and

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and put on ſackeclothe, and ſate hym downe in aſhes. Agayne, the chyldren of Iſraell (as wee reade in Eldras) when they faſted, dyd put on ſackeclothe, and ſprinkled earth vpon theyr heades, knowledged theyr ſynnes, prayed vnto God, and redde in the booke of the lawe of the Lord theyr God. Quene Eſther alſo when ſhe faſted, layed awaye her glorious apparel, and put on the garmentes that ſerued for ſyghyng and mourning. In the ſtede of precious ointment, ſhe ſcattered aſhes and donge vpon her heade, and as for her bodye, ſhee hũbled it with faſting, & brought it verye lowe. Lykewyſe kynge Achab, whẽ he was reproued of the Prophete Helyas for kyllynge Nabothe, fell to faſtynge, and

ii. Eldr. ix.

Esther. iiii

iii. Re. xxi.

and as he fasted, so dyd he putte sake cloth about hys flesh, lay in sackclothe, wente barefoote and hangyng downe hys heade.

## The.iiii. Chapter.

VWhat so euer myght make to the hūblyng and taming of the flesh, that dyd the godly men vse for the moste parte in the tyme of theyr fastynge. Neyther dyd those corporal exercyses displease God, seynge they came from a cōtrite hart and troubled spirit, wholye dependynge wyth strong faith on the great mercies of God. For Dauid saith: A troubled spirit is a sacrifice to God, nether doth he despise a contryte
Psalm.li. and hūbled hart. But these outward sygnes of humiliacio God vtterly abhorreth, whē they come not from a penitent and faythful

hart

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hart, and casteth them awaye as hypocrytysh and diuelish, as we read in the Prophet Esay, wherfore fast we, saye the hipocrites, and thou O God seest it not: We put our liues to straightnes, and thou regardest it not. Behold, saieth God, when ye fast, your luste remayneth styl, for ye do no lesse violence to your debters. Lo, ye faste to stryfe and debate, and to smite with the fyst of wickednes. Now ye shall not faste thus, that your voice might be herd aboue. Thyncke ye thys faste pleaseth me, that a man shuld chaste hym selfe for a day, and to wrythe his head about like an hoope, & to lie vpon the earth in an hearye cloth? Shuld that be called fastyng, or day that pleaseth the lord? Doth not thys fastynge rather please me,

Esai. lviii

me, that thou loose hym oute of bondage that is in thy daunger: that thou breake the othe of wicked bargaynes: that thou let the oppressed go free, and take from them all manner of burthens: to deale thy breade to the hungrye and bryng the poore wandering home into thy house: when thou seest the naked, that thou couer hym, and hyde not thy face from thy neighbour, and that thou dispyse not thyne owne fleshe: (If thou thus fastest) then shall thy lyght breake forthe as the morninge, and thy healthe floorysche rycht shortlye, thy ryghteousnes shal go before the, and the glory of the Lorde shall embrace thee. Then if thou callest, the Lorde shal aunswer the, yf thou cryest, he shall saye, here I am, Yea yf thou

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thou layest awaye from thee thy burthens, and holdest thy tyngers, and ceacest from blasphemous talkyng, yf thou hast compassion vpon the houngrye, and refreshest the trubled soule, then shal thy lyght spryng oute in the darknes, and thy darknes shalbe as the none day. The Lord shall euer be thy Guyde, and satysfye the desyre of thyne hearte, in the tyme of drouth, and fil thy bones wyth mary. Thou shalt be like a fresh watered garden, & lyke the the foũtayne of water, that neuer leaueth running. Againe, God saith by the prophet Joel, turne you vnto me wt al your hert, with fasting, weping, and mourning, teare your harts & not youre clothes. Moreouer albeit S. Paul pronounceth that maryed folke

Joel. ij.

shoulde

1.Cor.vii. should not wythdrawe them selues one from another any longe tyme, lest Satan tempt them to incontinency and vnclennes, yet ỹ they myght be the more apt to fast and to pray, he woulde haue them sometyme to withdraw thẽ selues one from a nother. Hereunto pertayneth the sayinge of the Prophete Joel: Blowe oute with the trumpet in Syon, proclayme a fastinge, cal the congregacion, and gather the people to gether, warne the congregaciõ, gather the elders, bryng the chil dren & suckelyngs together. Let the bridgrom go forth of his chãber, & the bryde out of her closet.

Joel.ii.

## The.v.Chapter.

The true Fast.

THus haue we learned out of the holye Scriptures, that the true and Christen fast is

to

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to abstayn not only from al kind of meates and drinkes (durynge the tyme of fastyng) but also frō al those thinges wherin the flesh hath pleasure and delectacion, & to occupy our selues in all godly and spiritual exercyses vnto the glory of God, the comfort of our neyghbour, and the helth of our own soules. But it is to be noted that thys abstinence or fast must be freely and wyllynglye done, or els canne it by no meanes please God. For what so euer commeth from an vnwilling and constrained mynde, God abhorreth, appere it neuer so godly and praise worthye before the worlde. God loueth a cherefull geuer, sayeth Saynte Paule. And the Psalmographe sayeth: An offerynge of a free hearte wyl I gyue the,

Constrained fastes please not God.

ii. Cor. ix.

psal. liiii.

and prayse thy name, O Lord because it is so cõfortable. They therefore that faste for custome sake or at the commaundemente of man onlye, and not of a good will and free spirit, do nether please God, nor profit thẽselues. Therfore shal that chaunce vnto them that God threatneth by the Prophet, sayinge: When they fast I wil not heare theyr praiers.

Iere. xiiii.

## The. vi. Chapter.

Fasts commaded of the hyghe powers.

HEare peraduenture some man wyll saye, Is it vngodlye to faste at the commaundemente of manne? What if the Magistrates cause a faste to be proclaymed? Ought it not to be obserued of theyr subiects? I aunsweare. If the hye powers at anye tyme commaundeth fastynge, so that it bee doone vnto

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a godlye ende, and ryseth not of superstition, it oughte to bee obserued of the subiectes. For wee haue examples hereof in the holye scryptures, whyche doo bothe sette forthe the authoritie of Magistrates in commaundynge fastynge, and also the obedyence of subiects in obseruing the same.

When the Israelytes were in greate feare and daunger of the Philistines, Samuell, which at that tyme iudged the people, called all the house of Israell together, proclaymed a faste, exhorted theym vnto prayer, wylled them to put away the straūge Goddes frome amonge theym, and wyth theyre whole hearte to tourne agayne vnto the Lorde theyr God, and he of hys mercye

1. Reg. vii

wolde surelye ryd de them out of the handes of the Philistines. The people gladly obeyed Samuels commaundemente, put awaye theyr idols, confessed theyr synnes, serued the Lorde onlye, and fasted the same daye vnto euen. And God saued them from ỹ hande of the Philistines all the daies of Samuell.

ii. Chro. xx

Kynge Jehosaphat hearinge that ỹ Moabits and Ammonites came with an exceadinge greate multitude against him to battel, was in greate feare, sought for healpe at the Lordes hande, proclaimed fastinge thorowe out all Juda, and called the people together to praye vnto the Lorde. The people willingli obeied the kynges commaundemente. All Juda came and stode before the Lorde

Becon, T.



Lorde wyth theyr yonge ones, theyr wyues and theyr children, to aske counsell of the Lorde. They both fasted and prayed vnto the Lorde theyr God for healp agaynste theyr enemies. And the Lorde gaue theim a wonderfull and glorious victorye.

Esdras returninge vnto Jerusalem with the childrene of Israell proclaimed a faste and exhorted theym to call on the name of God that he mighte giue theim a prosperous iourenye. The people obeied, fasted and prayed vnto the Lorde theyr God and they hadde good succesſe in all theyr doynges. i. Esd. viii.

The kynge of the Niniuites hearynge of the mooste terryble & greuous plage that was threatned vnto them and theyr cytye by Jona. iii.

Jonas the Prophet of god, humbled hym selfe, and sent forthe a proclamacion vnto al his people commaunding that neither man nor beaste, Oxe or shepe shulde taste anye thinge at al, and that they shuld nether eat nor drinck water, but put on sackclothe both man and beast, He commaunded them also in his proclamacion to repēt, to beleue God & hys word, to turne frō theyr wicked waies, and mightly to cry vnto God for mercy. The people did accordyng to the kings proclamaciō, so that both ỹ kinge and his subiects together repenting, fastinge, beleuing, turning from their wicked waies and mightely callyng on the Lord for mercy, & forgiuenes of theyr sins, wer saued both they & their citie withal that thei had.

Esther

Becon, T.

# of Faſtynge.

Eſther hearinge of the proclamacyon that kynge Aſſuerus at the ſuttle ſuggeſtion of wycked Haman hadde ſentforthe for the deſtruccyon of the Jewes, commaunded Mardocheus to gather together all the Jewes that were founde at Suſan, and to faſte for her, ſo that they ſhuld neyther eate nor dryncke by the ſpace of three dayes and three nyghtes, but ſpende all that time in faſtynge and prayinge. Her commaundemente was fulfylled Eſther. iiii

Eſther. iiii

It came to paſſe, that God preſerued the Jewes alyue, and broughte theyr ennemyes to a ſhamefull ende. Eſther. iiii

Thus haue we learened outs of the holye ſcryptures, that the rulers haue authoritie geuen the of God to comaūd theyr ſubiects

to fast, whenso euer anye vrgent cause is offered, as in the tyme of battell, honger, drought, plage, pestilence .&c. and that the people are bounde by gods commaundement to obey the magistrates and their ordinaunces in al such thinges, as they tender the glory of God, the conseruacyon of the common weale, and the health of theyr owne souls. This meaneth the Prophet Joel speakinge vnto the heads of the people on this maner: Proclaime fasting, cal ye congregacion, gather the elders and all the inhabytoures of the lande together into the house of the Lorde your God, and cry vnto the Lord, &c. Agame, blow out wyth the trompet in Sion, proclaime fasting, cal the congregacio & gather the people together.

Joel. i.

Joel. ii.

The

Becon, T.

# of Faſtynge.

## The.vii. Chapter

The faſt that commeth of a ſorowfull heart.

Furthermore the true and chri ſten faſte riſeth either of an hearte contryte and ſorowfull for the ſinnes commytted againſt God, or elſſe of a mynde feruentlye geuen to godlyneſſe. As touchinge that faſt, whiche commeth frome a contryte and ſorowfull hearte for the ſynnes commytted agaynſte God, it is a worthy and noble faſte in the ſyghte of God, and can not but hyghelye pleaſe him. For the Pſalmographe ſayeth, A troubled ſpirite is a ſacrifice vnto God, neyther dothe hee deſpyſe a contryte and humbled hearte. And God hym ſelfe ſayeth by the Prophete. Whome ſhall I regarde and fauoure: Euen hym that is poore, and of a lowelye and troubled ſpirit, and

Pſalm. li.

Eſaye. lvi.

ſuche

suche one as standeth in awe of my wordes. Who so euer doothe so feare God and stande in awe of hys indygnacyon and heauye displeasure, that he is loth to offende hym, and therefore seeketh al meanes possible to please hym: and if at anye tyme thorow fraylenesse of nature hee chaunceth to offende, hee is strayghtewayes angrye wyth hym selfe, repēteth of his former mysdedes, and conceiueth suche an inward sorowe in hys hearte, that hee delyteth in no worldlye thynge, neyther in meate, dryncke, apparell, rychesse, pastimes, pleasures. &c. but contynuallye sorroweth for hys dysobedyente vnkyndenesse and vnkynde dysobedyence against God our heauenly father, so that the verye trouble of hys

Mark wel

Becon. T.



heart wyl not ſuffer him to eat or drynke, tyl thorow continual cal lyng on the name of the Lord he feeleth in hys mynde ſome token of Gods goodnes, grace and fa=uour toward hym, and is thorow faythe in Chriſtes bloude fullye perſwaded that all hys ſynnes are forgeuen hym, and he again receyued into fauoure, the faſte of ſuche one is an acceptable ſa=crifyce vnto God.

Of thys inwarde ſorowe of the hearte dyd the faſtes of ma=nye good menne heretofore ryſe, as the holye Scryptures do de=clare, and therefore dydde they hyghlye pleaſe God, in ſo muche that God graunted theym theyr requeſtes, and was theyr merci=ful and moſt louing lord. Exam=ples hereof are the Iſraelytes,

that

that were gathered together at Hilpha, the Nimuites, Either & her companye, Judith wyth the citizenles of Bethulia, Achab, & diuers other, whose fasts God allowed because they proceded frō the heartes of suche as humbled them selues in his sighte, repented them of theyr sinnes, asked forgeuenesse, and promysed amendmente of lyfe.

## The.viii. Chapter.

The Faste that commeth of a mynde geuē to godlynes.

NOwe as touchinge that fast which springeth of a minde, geuen to godlynes, it cānot be disalowed of God. For hee that seeketh to please God, and to auaunce hys glory by any godly meanes, and that he may haue the grace soto doo, fasteth, prayeth, studieth, laboureth, his fasting his prayinge, his studyinge, hys la-

Becon. T.



labouringe canne not but please God, and haue good and fortunate successe. On thys maner fasted Daniell, that he myghte be the more apt to receiue the knowledge of goddes misteries, which were afterwarde declared vnto hym of the aungel. So lykewise dyd Esdras. Of thys godlie maner of fastynge spake Christe, whe the Disciples of Jhon came vnto hym. and demaunded, whye hys Disciples fasted not, as they and the Pharises dyd. To whome Christe aunswered and sayde. Cann e the brydegromes children mourne so longe as the brydegrome is wyth theym? But the dayes wyll come, when the brydegrome shall be taken from them, and then shall they faste. Accordynge to thys Prophecye,

Daniel. ix.

iiii. Esd. vi

Math. ix.

when

when Christ, whych is the bryde-
grome was taken from them. I
speake concernynge hys corpo-
ral presence (for by hys spirite he
Mat. xxviii is wyth the faithful vnto the end
of the worlde) they mourned, fa-
sted and praied for the gift of the
holy Ghost, whych was promised
Actes. i. to be sent vnto thē for to be theyr
Comfortour and teacher, and to
Jho. xiii. xv. xvi. lede thē into al truth, & the holye
ghoste was geuē vnto thē accord-
dig to ỹ promise of Christ & their
expectaciō. They fasted also and
prayed after they had receyued
the holy Ghost, that they myghte
worthelye fulfyl that office whi-
che was commited vnto theym,
that by theyr preachynge manye
thousandes myght be conuerted
Act. ii. iii. and saued, and it so came to pas.
The holy and deuoute wyddow
Luk. ii. Anna fasted and prayed contina

allye

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allye in the temple for the com-
myng of the promiſed Meſſias,
& ſhe ſawe him before her death.
Cornelius that godly mã beyng Actes.x.
troubled in his mynde, as it may
be thoughte wyth the multitude
of religions, whych at that tyme
reygned in the world, as the reli-
gion of the Gentyles, of the Je-
wes, of the Phariſeis, of the Sa
duces, of the Eſſees, and the late
ſprong vp religion of the Chri-
ſtians humbled hym ſelfe in the
ſyghte of God, mourned, faſted,
gaue almeſſe and prayed, that it
woulde pleaſe God to declare
vnto hym, whych amonge theym
al was the true relygyon that he
myght obſerue the ſame, frame
hys life accordyng vnto that, and
ſo pleaſe God. And to obtayne
thys thing of God, he continued
long faſtyng and praying. God
ther-

therfore accepted hys fast, heard hys prayer, and graunted hym hys request. The Prophets and Preachers at Antioche, fasted & prayed, that bothe they them selues might preach wyth frut, and that other also myght be sente of God, and appoynted vnto that office, that the glorye of God myght be set forth, that his word myght be receaued, and that all nacions of the earth myghte beleue in hym, and in hys Sonne Jesu Christ. Theyr fastyng and prayng wer alowed before god, and theyr desyres were fatisfied. For the holye ghoste sayde vnto them, separat me Barnabas and Saule for the woorke, whereunto I haue called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and layed their handes on them thei

Actes. xiii.

let

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lette them go. Paule and Barnabas also fasted when they prayed for the congregations of Listra, Iconium, Antioche and Pisydya, and when they ordayned them elders in euery congregacion to teache and instructe them in their absence, and to confirme them in the faythe and doctryne, whiche they had all readye receiued. And God gaue good succes to theyr doctryne and ministracion. All thele fasted of a minde feruentlye geuen vnto godlinesse. Actes. iiii.

Hytherto haue we learned oute of the holye scryptures, what the true and Christen faste is. Nowe let vs se in fewe woordes, whether the Poppyshe manner of fastinge, whiche we haue so manye yeares vnfruitefullye obserued, be lyke vnto that trade of fasting

which we haue so many yeres vn
fruitfully obserued, be lyke vnto
that trade of fastinge, whiche the
word of God hathe painted and
setforthe vnto vs.

## The.ix. Chapter

Of the po
pish man=
ner of fast
ynge.

THe true and Christen fast is
done frely and willingli, and
commeth frō the feruent mo=
cion of the spirit. The popish and
superstitious faste serueth the cu
stome onli, and is done at the com
maundemēt of man with a grud=
gynge and vnwillinge mynde,
which beinge lothe to faste if the
custome & mans ordinaunce wer
not, wisheth both the fast and the
commaunder of the fast at the de=
uil. And if any in so great a mul=
titude do willingly fast, yet is it
done partly to satisfy the custome
partly because they wil be coūted

good

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good deuout & catholike mẽ, partly to honour some sainct, partli to deserue remission of theyr sins, & to win euerlasting life. Can thys kinde of fasting plese god? They worshyp me in vain, saith Christ, teachinge doctrines that are the cõmaundements of men. Sainct Paule also saith, Whatsoeuer is not of faith is sinne. Matth. xv. Rom. xiiii.

The true & christen fast, during ỳ time of fasting is to abstain frõ al kinde of meates & drinkes (except very necessiti requireth ỳ cõtrary) & frõ al those things, wher in the flesh deliteth. For ỳ was ỳ maner of fasting amõg ỳ fathers of the old law, as we herd afore ſ, Hierome confirminge the same: The Iewes, saithe he, on those daies ỳ they fast, toke no meat, til they se ỳ euening star vp. And a certain coũcel called Concilium Lib. ii. cõtra Iouinianum.

Calcedonense, ordained, ỹ suche
shuld not be counted to faste, that
dyd eate before euensonge was
done, whiche at the time was not
celebrated, as it is nowe at. ii. or
iii. at the clocke after dinner, but
at nighte aboute the. viii. or. ix.
houre, when the day was al past.

The popish and superstitious
fasters perswade them selues to
fast wel, and to do a meritorious
dede, if they onli abstain frō flesh
though in ỹ morninge so soone as
they rise out of their beds, they en
farse & stuffe their belies with as
many fine cakes & tostes of whit
bread as they be able to eat, and
ỹ as much good ale ful of spices
or els burnt Maulmesy, as their
paūches can hold. And when din
ner come, if thei abstain frō a smo
ky peace of Bacon or hard salted

O worthy Fast.

and

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and poudred bieke or suche lyke, though they eate the most delicious fiches that can be goten, and enfarse their beastly bodies with al the swete meates that cã be inuented & sought out, yea & that so vnmeasurably, ẏ after they haue once dined, they are prouoked either to the pleasure of the bodye, or els like beasts of the belly fall straightwais vnto slepe, so ẏ they ar not hable to serue god, nor thẽselfs, nor ani other, yet thinck thei ẏ they fast wel and do god a great plesure. This maner of fasting amõg many other vsed a certayne monke in my coũtry, which not withstanding was coũted the greatest & deuoutest faster in al those quaters. His maner was for the most part to make but one mele a dai, as they vse to say, yet such a mele

The Papists drinkyng in ẏ mornyng.

The Papists manner of dynyng.

A story of a Monke wych was a great faster.

as the meat of ỹ one mele might haue semed sufficient to any reasonable creature to haue serued vi. godli fasters at a mele. Whē he came vnto Dynner and was set down at the table, his vse was euer to vnbuckle and let slacke his girdle a great quantitie, whiche before was streight girded to his bodi. He fel to his meat, as the hongry wolf to his pray, and neuer leafte of deuouringe the best meates that wer set before hym, till he had so stuffed hys reuygyous paunche, that his girdle being afore lose, was so hard to hys body, that he could not put his little finger betwene the girdle, & his clothes. He sate so swelling & sweting at the table thorow ỹ tomuch deuouringe of pleasaunte meats & whot wines, ỹ if Apelles had bene present with his pensil, he might haue had a holy paturn

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to paint a right Epicure. And not withstãdyng both he & such lyke wer counted good, holy, deuout, religious & catholikt fasters. To consume at one diner so much as wold serue thre, was no breaking of a fast. To deuoure vnmesurably al kinde of pleasaunt fishes, or whatsoeuer deinties beside could be deuised, was fast good inough in ỹ popes kingdõ, but to eate a peace of flesh although neuer so grosse, was twise a deadly sin, & punished w̃ fire. The eater of ỹ flesh was called a Lollore, & adiudged to be brẽt w̃ fire for his I know not how great offẽce, as though god abhorred more the eating of flesh then of fishe, or as though fish wer cleane in ỹ sight of god, & flesh vile & abhominable. O belied hipocrites whiche strain out a gnat & swalow doun a Cãmel. O Mat. xxiii

Of spirits of errour and teachers
1.Tim.iiii. of Diuelishe doctrynes, whiche
speake false thorow hipocrisie, &
haue their conscience marked with
an hote yron, forbiddinge to ma-
rie and commaunding to abstain
from meates, whiche God hathe
created to be receiued with than-
kes geuinge of the, which beleue
and know the truth. For al ye cre-
atures of god are good, and no-
thing to be refused, if it be recey-
ued with thanckes geuing. For
it is sanctified by the word of god
Titus.i. & praier. Unto ye pure al thgis ar
pure but vnto the ye are defiled &
vnbeleuing is nothing pure, but
euen the minde and conscience of
the is defiled. Why do not those
blind guides remember this say-
Math.xv. ing of our sauiour Christ, & cease
to condemne the innocent: That
whiche

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which goeth into the mouth, defi leth not ỹ man, but ỹ which com= meth out of the mouth, defileth ỹ man. For what ſo euer entreth in at the mouth, goeth into the beli and is caſt out into ỹ draught, but thoſe thinges which procede out of the mouthe, come from the hart, & they defile ỹ man. For out of the hart procede euil thoughts murders, breaking of wedlocke, whordomes, theftes fals witnes, blaſphemies, Theſe are the thin= ges whiche defile a man.

## ¶ The. x. Chapter.

AGaine at night albeit the po piſh faſters eat no meat, yet make thei ſuch a drinkig, as might iuſtli ſeme a coſtious kind of bāketting. Beſides their white bread & fine cakes, thei haue their figges, reaſons, almonds, aples, peares,

The Pa= pyſts drin kyng at nyght.

peares, nuts, carowis, biskits, suc cat', marmilado, cherise condite, quinches condite, & I know not what. And besides their nappi ale and heady beere, they haue sundry wines, some spiced, & som brewed w̄ a cup of Ipocras at y̆ latter end to make vp their mouthe withal and to finisshe theyr holye and religious fast. Is it not to be thought, y̆ these men take great paines in their fastig? do not such fastes please god greatly thinke you? O abhominable mockers of christen abstinence. Theese are those Epicures, whych as y̆ Poet saith, *Curios simulant et bacchanalia uiuunt.* These are those hipocrites, which bind heaui burdens & grieuous to be borne, & lay thē on mēs shoulders, but they thē selfs wyl not heaue at thē with one of their fingers,

mat. xxiii
Luke. xi.

Becon. T.



ſigers. And as ỹ welthi worldligs & rich Epicures thinck thẽ ſelues to faſte wel, if they make but one mele on ỹ day, though otherwiſe they enfarſe their bellies with ne uer ſo mani deinties, euen ſo iudg the baſer kinde of people, ỹ they faſt wel, if thei eat no meat, though they ſtuffe their paũches with ne uer ſo much bread & drinke. Notable is this ſentence of. S. Hierõ againſt al ſuch belli gods. What auaileth it, ſaith he, to eat no oil, & to ſeke about for ſuch meates as are moſt deinty & hardeſt to come bi, as dry figs, pepper, nuts, dates ſine cakes, hony, & piſtacies? All the deinties that gardens canne bring forthe are ſoughte, that we ſhuld not eat ỹ vſual bread. And while we ſeke deliciouſly to lyue, we ar plucked back from the king dom of heaue. Moreouer I hear ſay,

Ad Nepot

Piſtacies, is a kynde of Nuttes

say, that ther be some which con-
Nyse and fyne Fasters in S. Hieromes tyme.
trarye to the rule and nature of men, drynke no water, nor eate bread, but soupe not out of a cup but out of a shel deynty brothes, and herbes brayde, and the iuce of Beetes. Fye for shame, are we not ashamed of such fõdnes, nor wearye of the superstition? Yea we liuing in al deliciousnes, seke to be prayed for our abstinence. The myghtiest fastis water and bread, but because it hath no glorye nor notable fame, & because we al liue with bread & water, it is not coũted as the publyque & cõmon fast. Wold God ẏ al they that fast, yea & so many as profes Christ wold remẽber & cõtinually set before their eyes thys saying of S. Austẽ. It nothing profyteth, sayeth he, to haue passed an

Erser. lib. De tempore.

whole

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whole day in lōg fasting, if after ward the soul be oppressed wyth dylycioulnes or superfluitye of meates, for so is the minde much filled, soone dulled, and the erth of our body so watered, wil bring forth thornes of wicked lusts. Let therfore our meate be temperate & no more then is sufficient, & let our belly neuer be to ful. And let vs alwayes haue more mynd of the meate for the hearte, then of meate for the body, because with in the inward man we be made after the image of God, but in the flesh we are fashioned of the slime of the earth.

## The. xi. Chapter.

FUrthermore the Christen fast ryseth of an hart contrite and sorowful for the sins cōmitted against God, as we haue heard hereto=

heretofore. The popish faste ry-
seth either of custome or els of su
perstycyon. For the Papystes in
theyr chiefe & solempne fastinge
dayes are led wyth no true feare
toward God, neyther do they la-
ment theyr synes, nor study by har
tie repentãce, true faith & amend
ment of life to apease the wrathe
of God kindled against them for
their abominable liuing on those
dayes that they fast, more then a
ny other tyme. What Papiste a-
mong them forsaketh hys papi-
stry, hipocrisy, superstycion, and i-
dolatry, and gladly receiueth the
truth of Gods word? What coue
uetous worldling leaueth his co
uetousnes & exerciseth mercy to-
ward the poore mẽbers of Chryst?
What proud mã giueth ouer his
pride, and embraceth humilitie?

What

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What adulterer forsaketh hys adultri, and leadeth an honest cõuersacion? what glotton or dron kard giueth ouer hys glotony or dronkennes, and leadeth a sober lyfe? what vsurar leaueth his vsury? what bribarer his brybery? what catchepole hys extorcion? what tirante hys tirannye? what whore her whoredome? what rybalde hys rybaldrye? what blasphemer hys blasphemy? what enuious man his enuy? &c. As they begin their fast wt an vnrepentãt & wicked hert, euen so do they continue & end the same, so far is it of, that they haue any sorow in their heart for their syns committed against God, whych shoulde earnestlye moue them to forsake theyr meate, and to giue them selues wholy to be reconciled vnto god by repentynge and callyng

on

on the name of God for mercy in Christ Jesu our lord. Their fast therfore is abhominacion before God, forasmuch as in the time of theyr fastyng they gyue not ouer theyr wyckednes, and earnestlye seeke to please God.

Moreouer the Christē fast riseth also of an hert feruētly geue to godlynes. In thys behalfe also ỹ popish fast agreeth nothing with Christē abstinence. For the Papystes myndes are set on no true godlines in the time of their fastyng, but altogether on supersticion & hipocrisie. Theyr godlynes, yea rather vngodlynes, when they fast, consisteth in obseruyng the popes ceremonies and mans inuencions. If they fulfyl those, they thynke thē selues godlynough, when notwithstāding they

In what thynges the godlynesse of ỹ papistes consisteth.

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they be furdest from all true godlines. Nether do they direct their fastes vnto anye godly end, but as euery one fantasieth, so do they faste, yea and that for sondry purposes. Some fast breade and water, some eate nothinge but fruit, some taste no kynde of meate or dryncke that is dressed with fyre, some in their faste go wolwarde, barefoted and barelegged. some are so scrupulous & superstitious in their fastyng, that in the time of their faste they wyll neither eate nor drynck, nor sleepe, nor yet swalowe downe their owne spittle, If they do, they thincke themselues damned. Prouided alway that they also muste be fyrste and laste at churche. If they obserue these fastes, they promyse theymselues, I knowe not howe great

The fondnes of the papistes in their fastyngs.

rewardes, ane howle seates in heauen aboud other, and howe many gay garlandes of red roses and swete violetes, that God and oure Ladye and the blessed saints shal giue them after thys lyfe for theyr deuout fastyng and prayty paines. O fond folishnes & folysh fondnes, worthy rather to be lamented then to be laughed at. If it be done of a good entent, say they, al is well whatsoeuer we do. If we fast the blessed Saintes euens, and worshyppe them wyth a Pater noster, Aue and Creede, they wyll do for vs whatsoeuer we are. S. George wyl defend vs in battell agaynst our ennemies. S. Barbara wyll kepe vs from thonderyng and lightenyng. S. Agasse wyl saue our house from burning. S. Antony wyl

The superstitious worshyppyng of Saynctes.

Becon. T.



will keepe oure swyne. S. Luke wil saue oure Oxe. S. Job wyll defend vs from the poxe. S. Gertrude wil keepe oure house from mise & rats. S. Nicholas wyl preserue vs from drowning. S. Loi wyl cure our horsse. S. Dorothe wil saue our hearbs & flowers. S. Sith wyl bring again whatsoeuer we lose. S. Apoline wyl heal the pain of our tethe. S. Swete-ladde and. Sayute Agnes wyll sende vs Maides good husbandes. Sainte Peter wyll lette vs in at heauen gates, wyth a thousande suche lyke. Thys superstition and idolatry is the godlines of the Papistes. If they fast and serue the saints vnto this end, & on their feastful daies fare deintely & drynke largelye in the honour of the good saint, they think

thei haue done much for the saint and haue shewed theym selues good, godly and deuout persons. O double vngodlines.

What shall I speake of the spiritual exercises, whiche the true and Christen faste requireth to be done in the time of fasting. If we marke wel the maners of the papists, and note theyr behauour on theyr fastinge daies, we shall easly perceiue that in the middes of their fastinge they are no lesse wicked & vngodlye, no les proud and enuious, no lesse lecherous, and couetous, no les backbitinge and slaunderous, no les polling and pillinge, no les churlish and vnmerciful, no les geuen to glotoni & dronkennes, then thei wer afore. They lamēt not their syns, they fall not to faithefull prayer,

they

Becon, T.



they call not on the name of God as they oughte, but flie vnto creatures, they gyue not them selues to the hearinge or readynge of gods worde, which many of them extremelye abhorre, they go not about to leaue theyr idolatri and wish to be better instructed in the knowledge of gods lawe. &c. but continuing stil in their old superstition & idolatri thei thinke them selues godly inough and good inough. If thei eat no flesh, if thei forbeare white meates al is wel whatsoeuer they do, though ther be no repentaunce, no calling on the name of god, no correccion of mäners, no amēdmēt of life, God haue mercy on vs, god open their eies & giue thē grace to amende.

Hitherto haue we learned out of the word of god, what the true

and Christen faste is. We haue hearde allo, howe greatly the popyshe manner of fastinge differeth from the true vse of fastinge whiche the holy scriptures teach. Nowe the order requireth, that we allo declare, howe we oughte to faste, that we maye please god and not faste in vaine as the hypocrytes do.

☞ Howe we oughte to Faste.

## The. xii. Chapter

IN declarynge howe we ought to faste, whome shoulde I rather followe then oure sauiour Jesus Christe the teacher of all truthe, whyche saithe: When ye faste be not sad as the hipocrites are. For they disfigure theyr faces, that they myghte be seene of menne to faste. Verelye I saye vnto you, they haue their reward

Matth. vi.

But

Becon, T.



But thou when thou fastest annointe thy heade, and washe thy face, that it appeare not vnto men, that thou fastest, but to thy father, whyche is in secrete. and thy father whyche seeth in secrete shal rewarde the openlye, Christ oure sauioure in thys place doth not only rebuke the hipocriticall and superstitious manner of the vngodlye fasters, but hee also teacheth the true manner of fastynge. Of these hys woordes wee learne, that who so euer entendeth to faste a ryghte, hee muste obserue three thynges. The fyrst is, that hee annoynte his heade. The seconde that hee washe hys face. The thyrde that he faste in secrete. These Phrases annointynge of the heade, and washing of the face with many other seme

The thinges are to bee obserued in fastyng.

verye straunge maners of speaking to such as are not perfectly exercised in the reading of ỹ holy scriptures and of the auncient writers, it is conuenient therfore, that we learn to know what is meante by them. And no man in this behalf can satisfy our desire better then our golden mouthed Doctoure. S. John Chrisostome, whose wordes are these.

Hom. xlvi Ex cap. vi Math. ij.

In the annointing of the heade, saith he, we knowe that mercy is signified. Therfore to annoynte the heade, is to shewe mercye to our neighbour. For that mercye that is done vnto a poore man, is referred vnto God, which is the heade of the man. as the Apostle and the lord him self saith. Whatsoeuer ye haue done to one of my lesest brothers, ye haue done it vnto

What it is too annointe the heade.

i. Cor. xi. Math. xxv

Becon. T.



vnto me. In the stede of ẏ which mercye wyth the diuine retribuci on as with a certayne heauenlye oyle, we ar poured and shed ouer by hym, which saith. Blessed are the mercifull for God shall haue mercye on them. Holy Dauid also did knowe the vnccion and anointinge of the celestial oyle in the heade, when he sayde, as in ẏ ointmente, whiche came down in to the bearde.

Math. v.

Psl. cxxxiii

But in washinge the face, the puritie of a cleane bodye and of a sincere conscience is knowen to be signified so that to washe the face, is to make cleane the face of our hart from al filthines of sin, & from the vncomelines of trespas, and to haue a very pure conscience, that we may truly haue in vs the gladnes of celestiall ioye.

What it is to wash the face.

and

and the familiaritie and cheare-fulnes of the holye ghoste.

Hytherto haue I rehearsed the wordes of. S. Jhon Chrisostome whereby we maye learne, that to annoynte oure heade is none other thynge, then to shewe oure selues beneficial to the poore members of Christe. Againe, to washe oure face is to make cleane both bodye and soule from synne and wyckednes. If we therefore wyll fast a right after the mind of. S. John Chrisostome, we must first annoint our head, ỹ is to say, comfort the poore people wᵗ such good as god hath committed vnto vs. For the ritches that we haue bee not ours, but they be gods, as he saith by ỹ Prophet, gold is mine, siluer is mine. The psalmograph also saith, the earth is the lords

Agge. ii.
Psa. xxiiii.

Becon. T.



al that is contained in it.

## ¶ The. xiii. Chapter.

Aspectacle for rytche men.

GOd hath put ye goods of this worlde into the ritche mens hands, that they shuld distribute part of them to the pore people. They ar the stewards of god and the dispensatours of his treasures, that they conueniently lyuing of them, shuld also with the distribucion of part of them comforte the nedy members of Christ If they spend them otherwise the God hath appointed in his word they shall render a streyghte accountes for it to the highe iudge Christe. They haue nothynge at all, but that they shall be called too accountes for it euen too the vttermooste farthynge.

If they bee not founde to haue

Math. xxv

vsed

vsed theyr talente wel, and vnto the profit of other, they shal with that vnprofitable seruaunte of the Gospell bee caste into vtter darckenes, where weppynge and gnashinge of teethe shall be. If they be proued vnmercifull and negligent in the destribucion of the worldlye goodes, surely they shalbe caried with the rich glotō of whom blessed Luke speaketh in the gospel, vnto hel, and there burne in suche cruell and bytter flames, as the fire wherof shal ne-
Luke. xvi.
Esay. lxvi. uer be quenched, neither shal the worme which shal gnaw the consciences of them that are ther, die at any time, as the prophet saith.

What cause then haue the ritch menne to boaste them selfes and to glory of theyr worldly goodes or to auaunce them selues aboue other

Becon. T.



other for theyr possessions sake? Certes none at all, more then a greate mans seruaunte hathe, to whome his Lorde and Master hathe committed hys goodes for a certayne space to kepe, the seruant loking at euery hour, when his master wil cal him to accoũts and require them of him againe.

Basilius Magnus hathe a notable sentence, and it is this: He is a very thete and a robber, saith he, which maketh that thing hys own that he hath receiued to destribute and giue abrode. For the bread that thou retainest & kepest is the bread of the hongri, ye garment, which ye kepest in thy chest, is the garmente of the naked, the sho that is mould with the, is the shoo of him that is vnshod, & the moni, which ye hidest in the groũd

Ser. i. in diuites auaros.

An harde saying for vnmercyful rytchemen.

is

is the mony of the nedye. Moreouer thou doest iniury and plain wrong to so many as thou forsakest, when thou art able to helpe them. Here to pertayneth the saiyng of the wyseman. The bread of the nedy, is the lyfe of ỹ poore, he that defraudeth him of it, is a manslear. God also by the Prophet teacheth, that that fast pleaseth hym best, whych is accompanied wyth the workes of mercye saying: Breake thy bread to the hungry, and lead the nedye and wayefaring into thy house. Whe thou seest a naked manne couer hym, and despyse not thy flesshe. Mark that he sayth: Breake thy bread to the hongrye. Certayne that expound this text, saye that then then breakest thy breade to the hungry, when thou so fastest, that

Ecc. xxxiiii

Esai. lvi.

What it is to breake thy breade to the hungrye.

Becon, T.



that thou sparest from thine own belly to gyue to the pore hongry man, For a Christen man ought to be no les careful for the poore, then for him selfe. We therefore do breake our bread to the hongrye, when wee gyue hym that, whych we our selues necessaryly shoulde haue eaten. So that to annoynte our head, is to breake our bread to the hongri, to lodge the poore in oure house, to gyue clothes to the naked, and to comforte accordynge to oure habilytye so manye as haue neede of our helpe. Unto these workes of mercy doth our Sauiour Christ exhort vs in the Gospel, saying: when thou makest a dynner or a supper, cal not thy fryendes, nor thy brethren, neyther thy kynsfolke, nor thy rytch neyghbours, Luk. xiiii.

leaste

leaste they also bid the againe, & recompence be made the. But when thou makeste a feaste, call the poore, the feble, the laime, and the blinde, and thou shalt be happye, for they can not recompence the. But thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the righteous. Again he sayeth, geue almes of those things ye haue and beholde all thinges are cleane vnto you. But of this we shal entreate more largelye when we come to the true vse of fastinge.

Luke. xi.

## ¶ The. xiiii. Chapter.

MOreouer if we will faste aright, we are not only commaunded to annointe oure heade, that is to say, to shew mercye to the poore people, but also to washe oure face, that is, to make our heartes cleane from al sinne thorowe

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thorow faithfull repentaunce, that we maye haue a pure conscience. For it is not inough to be benefitiall to other, excepte we also be beneficiall to oure selues. Thys shall come to passe, if we laboure withall mayne to haue a mynde pure and cleane from all carnall affectes, a bodye voide of wicked dedes, and a lyfe garnished wyth good workes. For what was the cause that God dyd caste awaye the fastes and solemne feastes of the Jewes, but only that they washed not theyr face, that is, they went not about to put of their old conuersacion and to become new men: I hate and abhorre, saythe God, youre sacrifices, youre solempne feastes and your fastes. Offer me no mo oblacions, for it is but lost labour. Your incense

Why god did cast awaye the sacrifices, feasts and fasts of the Jewes.

Esaye. i.

is abhominaciō vnto me, I haue no pleasure in your sacrifices. I maye not awaye with your newe mones, your sabbathes. &c. Why loe? For your hāds, saith he, ar ful of bloude. Your heartes are full of vengaunce, youre consciences are spotted and defyled with all kinde of sinnes, your life is abhominable in my sight, ye walke hauinge no fear of God before your eies. &c. What is then to be done? Be ye washed, saith he, be ye clene take awai your euil thoughts frō mine eies. Cease to do euil, learn to do wel. Seke iudgmēt, heaipe ỳ poze oppzessed, be fauourable to the comfoztles, defend the wi-
Iere. iii. dow. &c. Again God saith, washe thine hart frō wickednes, ỳ thou maist be healped. How long shal thy noisome thoughts remain w̄

Becon, T.



the: god hateth those fastes, those
prayers, those good deds, as they
cal them, that come frō a bloudy
cōscience, a spotted & pocki soul, a
defiled bodi & wicked life, as a cer
tayn man saith, It profiteth a mā nothig at al to fast & pray & to do other good things of deuocion, ex cept the minde be refrained from vngodlines, & the tung frō back bitings. For god hath euer a prin cipal respect to the hart of the do= er of the work, as we se in ỹ histo rie of the sacrifices of Abell and Cain. If the hart be pure, cleane & faithful, thē doth god approue ỹ worke, but if it be spotted wyth sinne, god casteth it awai, appear it neuer so glistering and commē dable in the sight of the worlde. Offer not, sayeth the wyse man, wycked giftes, for God wyll not

Pius pp. Roma.

Gene. iiii.

God iudgeth the worke of the heart, and not ỹ hearte of the worke

Ecc.xxxv. receiue them. Salomon also sai-
Prou.xv. eth, the sacrifices of the vngodly are abhominable. That fast therfore that cōmeth not from a pure harte, from an vncorrupt conscience and from a godlye life, pleaseth not God, but is abhominacion vnto the Lorde oure God, yea it is by no meanes worthye the name of a faste. For Basilius Magnus sayeth, the true & christen faste is not only to abstayne from meates but also to eschewe euill thynges. And oure golden mouthed Doctoure saith: he that abstaineth frō meat & not frō euill works, appeareth to fast, but yet he fasteth not in deede. For loke how much he fasteth vnto mē so much doth he eat before god, seinge he goeth forth stil to sin. The auncient Doctour Origene saith also

Ser.i.de Ieiunio.

Hom.xx. in Cap.vi. Math.

In Leuit. Homeli.7. Cap.vi.

wilte

Becon, T.



wilt thou that I shewe vnto the, what fast ye oughtest to fast? Fast from euil dedes, abstain from euill woordes, refraine from euill thoughts. &c. Suche a fast pleaseth God, Agayne. S, Hierome sayeth, then is the abstynence of the bodye commendable before God, when the mind fasteth from vices, For what dothe it profit to make weake the bodye with abstinence, when the mind swelleth with pride? Hereunto pertaineth the sayinge of. S. Austen. The fastes of christen men, saythe he, are rather to be obserued spiritually then carnally. In consideration wherof, let vs fast principally from our sins, least our fast be refused of the lord, as the faste of the Jewes were. What a fast is this, that an impostore or deceit-

Ex sermone. C. lxxii

ful felow I can not tel who shuld abstaine from meates, whych the Lorde hath created, and yet wareth fatte with the fatnes of sins: Haue I cholen suche a faste sayeth the Lorde? Reade the eighte and fiftie Chapter of the Prophete Esaye. And a litle after he sayeth. The faste, which the most highest do approue and allowe, is not onlye to leaue of to refresh the body, but also to departe from euyll dedes. In a nother place he also saithe. The great and generall faste is to abstaine from iniquities and vniawefull pleasures of the worlde: whyche is a perfecte faste, that we forsakinge vngodlines and the lustes of the worlde, shulde liue in this world soberlye, righteouslye and godlye Of these authorities of the holye

Esay. lviii

Er tract. xvii. in Ie anes.

Titus. ii.

Becon. T.



Doctours also do we learn, that the true Christen faste dothe not only consiste in the abstinence of meates, but also in the forsakinge of sinne. Therefore if we entende to faste a right, and to make our fast acceptable to God, let vs prouide earnestlye, that oure faste procede from a pure and cleane heart, voyd of al carnall affectes, stuffed ful of faithe and charitie, and altogether studious of true innocencye and vnfained godlines. So shal it come to pas, that both our fastes and all that euer we do according to gods worde, shal highly please God. Hitherto haue we heard what it is to annoint the head and to washe the face. Nowe remaineth to declare what it is to fast in secrete.

## ¶ The .xv. Chapter.

What it is to faste in secrete.

TO faste in secrete, is not to keepe oure selues close from the sighte of men, and so hydinge our selfes in priuy corners to abstaine frō meate, but not to hunte and hawke after vaine glorye nor the prayse of men, for our fastinge, nor to seke to be sene of men whyle we faste to the ende, that they may commend & prayse vs, as the hipocrites did, whome Christ reproueth for their vaine glory and ambicion, & saith, they haue their reward, not of god but of mē. We ar counted before god then to fast in secrete, whē we fast with such a minde, ỹ we wold fast in dede, thoughe no man liuinge did se vs, and when we regarde more the accōplishment of gods wyll and the subiection and taming of our body, then al the glo

Math. vi.

rye

# of Fastyng.

rye and prayse that man can giue vnto vs. It is lawful for a Christen man to fast, to praye to geue almes, or to do anye other good worke before the world, so that the desire of worldly prayse and vain glorye be not in his minde. For our sauiour Christ saith, let your light so shine before me that they may se your good workes & glorify your father which is in heauen. S. Paul also saith, be such as no man can complaine on, and the vnfained sonnes of God without rebuke in the myds of a crooked and peruerse nacion, among whō se that ye shine as lyghtes in the world, holding fast the worde of life. Again, S. Peter counceleth vs, that where as some backebite vs as euil doers, we shuld leade an honest and godlye life among them,

It is lawful to do anye good deede in the syghte of men, so the vayne glorye be absente. Math. v.

Philip. ii.

1. Peter. ii.

them, that they seinge oure good workes maye prayse God in the daye of visitacion. But if we seke anye prayse of men, and desyre to be magnified for our good dedes doinge, verely then haue we our rewarde not of God but of the worlde. For there is not a more pestiferous infeccion to poisonne anye good woorcke, that it shuld lose the reward before God, then the desyre of vaine glory & world lye prayse. For that it is, which Christ condemneth in the almes dedes, praiers and fastes of the hipocrits. S. Jhon Chrisostome saith, they that so fast, ẏ thei plese men rather then God, they haue a labour concerning the afliccion of the body, but thorow vain glory thei cā haue no reward of their labour with god, which whē they ought to do it onli for religion or

The desire of vayne glory poysoneth all good workes.

Math. vi

Hom. xlvi in Mat. vi

faithes

Becon. T.



faithes sake, had rather to seke ẏ vain glory of the world. And therfore saith the Lord, verely I saye vnto you, thei haue receuied their reward. S. Austē also saith, some good thinges may be done, & yet they not doing them wel, of whom they ar don. For it is a good thig to healp a man ẏ is in ieopardy & in daunger, namely if he be an in innocent. But he that dothe this good dede, if he doth it because he loueth the praise of menne rather thē ẏ glori of god, it is not good ẏ he doth, for as much as he ẏ doth it, is not good. For God forbid, ẏ that shuld be or be coūted a good wil, which glorieth in other, or in it self, & not in ẏ lord. Hereto pertaineth ẏ saying of. S. Ambrose when thou fastest, boaste not thy selfe, nor bragge not of it, for in so doynge thy faste profyteth the

Lib. iiii. cōtra Iulia. cap. iii.

Mark wel

In libro. de Delia et ieiunio.

nothing

nothing. Those thinges that are done vnto ostentacion & boasting continew not to be recompensed in the world to come, but they are consumed & brought to noughte with the rewarde of present thinges. Of eschewinge vaine glory oure sauiour Christe gaue vs notable examples in al his doings.

Mat. viii. When he had healed the Leper, he said vnto him, se ꝙ tel no man.

Math. ix. After that he hadde restored the two blinde men to theyr syght, he charged them, that no man shuld knowe of it. And when he hadde

Mark. vii. made whole the dume and deafe man, he commaunded them that wer present that they shuld tel it no man. In al these his doinges and such like he gaue vs exãple to fle vain glory & worldly praise and onli to seke the glori & honor

of

Becon. T.



of god, and that we shuld reioice and glorye in nothing but in god alone, as it is wrytten, he that reioiseth, let him reioise in the lord Therfore all the workes that we do, whether thei be praier, fasting almes deede, watching, visiting of the sicke, comforting of the prisonners, or ani other that be agreable to the word of God, we must do them with a single minde, and with such an heart, as being altogether estraũged from vain glory and worldly praise, seketh onli the honour of god & the accõplishment of his most blessed will. So shal we do our workes in secrete, and oure father, which seeth in secrete shal recompence vs openli

Jerem. ix. i Corin. i.

Math. vi.

Thus haue we hearde boothe what the true & christen fast is, & also how we ought to fast. Let vs

nowe

nowe fall in hand wyth the third and laste parte of thys treatyse, and so make an ende,

☞ Of the true vse of fastinge.

## ¶ The.xvi. Chapter.

The maner of fastinge in the Pops kingdome was wycked.

THe vse yea rather the abuse of fasting in the Popes kingdome was verie wicked and worthye to be abhorred of ꝑ faithfull. For besides the fondnesse of the symple people in abusing the noble vertue of fasting for want of knowledg vnto many and sundrye superstitious and vngodlye purpos̄s as partelye heretofore we haue heard: ther haue not wāted among them that profes diuinitie whych both in their sermōs and writyngs corrupted the true and godlye vse of fastynge. For they haue taughte, that fastynge of it selfe is so worthye a vertue,

and

Becon. T.



and of so greate power, that it is hable to satysfye for synnes, to appeale the wrathe of God, to reconcile vs to god, to deserue righteousnesse and to wynne euerlastynge lyfe. Thys doctryne is an enemye to the free grace of god, iniurious to the fruites and merites of Christes passion and by no meanes to be receiued of the faithfull Christians. For all be it fastinge bee wythoute doubte a worthye fruite of repentaunce, and pleaseth God, when hee that fasteth, humbleth hym selfe in the syghte of God, confesseth hys synne, repenteth hym of hys mysdedes, calleth for mercye, beleueth to bee forgeuen for Christes sake, and studyeth earnestly frō hēce forth to lead a life com

The erroneous doctryne of the Pappistes cōcernyng Fastynge.

Fastynge is a fruite of repentaunce.

conformable to the rule of gods worde, yet is it not of such vertue in it selfe, that it is hable to bring vnto vs those good things which we looke for at the hande of God thorowe Christe oure Lorde, I meane the fauoure of God, the forgiuenes of sinnes, the gifte of the holye ghoste, a newe hearte stuffed with spiritual affects, righteousnes, peace, quietnes of conscience, and euerlastinge life. These be the singulare and free giftes of God, geuen only of him to so manye as be borne a newe by the holye ghost, and beleue in him. If the fastes of the holy men of whome we heard here to fore had bene directed vnto that end, that is, if by their fastes they had soughte to be iustified, and tourned theyr eyes from that blessed

Gene. xii. xii. xxvi. and. xxviii

sede,

Becon, T.



ſede, in whome all nacions of the earthe were promiſed to be bleſſed, ſo had theyr faſtes bene not commended but diſcommended of God, not fauoured but abhorred, not receiued but reiected. But theyr faſtes came from a penitent and faithful heart toward God, and were exerciſed of them vnto godly purpoſes, as we haue heard, they ſeekinge ſaluacion onlye at the mercyfull hande of God for the promyſed ſeede ſake therefore were boothe they and theyr faſtes allowed of God. Let vs therefore learne the true vſe of faſtinge, that we maie knowe to what ende oure faſtes oughte to be directed, leaſt while we ſeke for medicine, we find poiſon, and receiue for ſaluacion, damnaciō.

The faſtes of the olde Fathers.

## The.xvii. Chapter.

Job. vii. Fyrste forasmuche as the lyfe of manne vpon earthe is nothinge els then a warrefare

Galath. v and contynuall aſſycte wyth her ghoſtly enemies, ſeinge alſo that the fleſhe withoute ceasing thorowe the ſubtile ſuggeſtion of ſathan luſteth contrarye to the ſpirite, ſo that man in thys vale of miſerye is neuer at quiet, nor hathe ſo much leasure as once to breathe, ſo greatlye on euery ſide is he beſieged and compaſſed aboute with cruel enemies, which aſſaulteth him, and tẽpteth hym vehementelye that excepte hee ſtronglye fyghte agaynſte hym wyth the weapons of the Lorde, and alſo yf hee geueth not dylygente watche, hee ſtreyghtwayes falleth into his aduerſaries hãds

and

Becon, T.



and is vtterly vndone. It is conueniente, that whoſoeuer entendeth to gette a gloryous and triumphante victorye ouer hys ennemyes, and not lyke a cowarde eyther to be putte to flyghte, or els to be ouercome, and for euer and euer peariſh, but rather valiauntlye to fyghte and neuer to ceaſe tyll he hathe ſubdued hys ennemyes, that he ſtriuinge courageouſlye maye obtaine that rewarde, whiche is promyſed to ſo manye as fyghte lawefullye, euen the crowne of glorye and the enherytaunce of euerlaſtynge ioye, it is conuenyente, I ſaye, that hee ſeeketh all meanes poſſyble to auoyde the daunger of hys ennemyes, and ſo to behaue him ſelf in al his doings that his

ii. Tim. ii.

aduersaries mai haue no interest in him, nor spye anye voyde place aboute him where they may giue the fyrste aduenture, and by thys meanes be encouraged not only to assaile him, but also to vãquish him. And for as muche as the deuil oure heade ennemie goeth about not only hym self lyke a roringe Lion sekynge whome hee maye deuoure, but besides innumerable thousandes of wycked spirits, which pertaine to his armye, and are ready at euery moment to seeke the destruccion of man, hathe also two speciall seruauntes, whiche daylye procure oure vtter subuersion, I meane the worlde and the fleshe, the one beinge his waitinge man, the other his hande maide, readye at euery hour to assayle and to subdue

1. Peter. v.

The diuelles armi ar ẏ wycked spirits the world and the fleshe.

Becon, T.



due man, if diligente watche bee not geuen on oure behalfe: and forasmuch as amonge theſe our deadlye aduerſaryes the fleſh is the mooſte preſente and mortall foo, and an houſhoulde ennemye euer at home and neuer without, euen with in oure owne breſt, caryed aboute with vs wherſoeuer we goo, and accompanyinge vs what ſo euer we do, and continuallye prouokinge vs vnto thoſe wicked acts, which ſtriue againſt the heauenlye motions of gods holye ſpirite, that by this meanes ſhe maye doo her maſter the deuill greate pleaſure by bringing vs to deſtruction: if we entende to ſubdue and get the victory of thys oure houſhoulde ennemye the fleſhe, let vs knowe for a certentie, that ther is not a more ſpe Galat. v.

dye waye nor a more presente remedy agaynst her assaultes, then godlye fastinge is, which enemy, that is the flesh, beinge once subdued, the forayne ennemyes shal the easelier be kept oute, and we liue in the more quietnesse by the healpe of goddes spirit and feruente prayer.

## ¶ The. xviii. Chapter.

AND heare begin we to learn the true vse of fastinge, and to know vnto what end our fastes ought to be directed. The fyrste true and godlye vse of fastynge is to subdue the flesshe, to mortifye her beastelye affectes, and to represse the wilde & ranck mocions thereof, that it maye be subiecte and obediente to the spirite as an handmaide to her maistres, or a seruaunte to his Lord.

For

Becon, T.



For al be it God hathe made vs of two partes, that is, of bodye and spirite, yet hath he ordayned the spirite to bee ruler, and the flesche to bee in subiection to the spirite. But not wyth standynge the flesche (suche is her wylde disobedience and disobedient wyldenesse) canne by no meanes abide to submyt her selfe to the rule of the spirite, but continuallye stryueth to haue the vpper hand, and contrarye to gods appoinmente to make the spirit subiect vnto her. The spirite prouoketh vnto humilitie, Charitie, Pacience, quyetnesse, continencye, pureneſſe of lyfe, moderate eatynge and drinkinge. &c. The flesh contrariwise calleth vnto pride, hautynesse of mynde, enuye, malice vengaunce discord, whordō, auoutry, glotony

The rebellion of the flesche against the spirite.

dronkenship.&c. So that ther is a continual conflicte betwene the spirite & the flesshe, who shal haue the victorye. as. S. Paule saieth If the flesh subdueth the spirite, Galath. v then pe aryse wee, but if the spirite accordynge to goddes ordynaunce beareth rule, and hathe the flesshe in subiection, then well are we. Nowe that thys maye be broughte to passe, godly & Christen abstinence shall healp greatlye. For there is nothinge that Fastynge tameth the flesh. tameth and bringeth vnder the wylde and vnrulye lustes of the flesh, as fasting and abstinēce, euen as there is nothing that maketh a wilde and fearce horsse so tame and obedyent to his master as the withdrawing of his haye, otes, breade, and suche other prouender. They therefore that wyl

vse

Becon, T.



vse theyr faste a ryghte and vn-
to a godlye ende, muste fyrste di-
recte it vnto this purpose, that by
the exercyse thereof they may bry-
dle the wantonnes of the flesshe,
and refraine theyr bodyes frō sin
that the spirite, whiche is a precī- i. Pete. iii.
ous thinge before God, maye be
quiet, or els all other exercises &
trauails although neuer so pain
full, are vayne. To thys vse ser-
ued the fastes of manye godlye
bothe men and women in tymes
paste, that the bodie beinge mor-
tified, the spirite might the more
freely attend on God. The prince
like Prophet saieth, I putte on
sacke cloth and humbled my soul Psa. xxxv
with fasting. This holy Prophet
and kinge vsed fastinge to thys
ende, that hee might bringe his
bodye lowe and in subiection to

the

the spirit, that the vngodli lustes
ii. Reg. xi thereof myghte no more rage & rule in hym as they dyd, what time he tooke Bothsaba the wyfe of Urias & laye wyth her, & that he myghte freelye enioie her, caused her husbande to bee slayne
Psal. cix. in battell. In a nother place hee also sayeth, my knees are weake thorowe fastinge, my fleshe dryed vp for want of fatnes. We reade lykewyse, that that mooste vertu-
Esthe. xiiii ous Quene Esther broughte her bodye verye lowe wyth fastinge
i. Cori. ix. Agayne S. Paul sayeth of him selfe, I chastise and tame my bodye, and bring it into subieccion, least bi any means it come to pas that when I haue preached to other, I my self shuld be cast awai These with manye other chastysed and tamed theyr bodyes with

fasting

Becon, T.



fastinge, that the spirite myghte haue free course vnto God and bee occupyed aboute heauenlye thynges. After thys manner oughte all true Christians to do, that the bodye being kept in subiection, the spirite maye rule and haue the ouerhande, and by no meanes to follow the wycked maner of the papists, whych in theyr fastes abstain frō grosse flesshe, & deuoure all kynde of deinty and fine fishe, whiche make theyr bodies muche more prone to lewdnes, then the eatyng of flesh, and also bringeth the spirit into miserable seruitute & bondage. O vngodlye manner of fastinge.

## The. xix. Chapter.

VNto this taming, chastining subduing & mortifying of ỹ flesh by ỹ true vse of fasting doth

De salut. documento Capt. xxv

dothe. S. Austen exhort vs, saye=
inge: Let oure flesh be continu=
allye subiecte to oure soule, and
serue it as an handmaide dothe
her Maistres. Lette vs not suffer
oure bodye to be ouerlustye, least
it warre against the spirite, but
alwayes let the flesshe be subiecte
that it obei the commaundement
of the holye ghost. Neither let vs
Gene. xvi. suffer the handmaide to waxe to
rancke, leaste she set lyght by her
maistres, but rather let her obey
all her commaundementes and
do her seruise. For as horses must
be brideled, so muste our bodies
be restrained with fasting, watch
& prayer For as if the guides of
chariots do giue their horsse the
reanes thei draw them into head
long down fals so if our body be
not brideled, the soul and it both
toge=

Becon. T.



together slip into the depe pit of hel. Let vs therfore be good and experte Carters or Chariot dryuers to our body, that we may go the rightwai. &c. Again he saieth fasting swageth the intemperancye and vnrulines of the bodye, and represseth or keepeth vnder the troublous mocions & raging lustes therof. It causeth the soul to be at liberty and not to be oppressed of the flesh, as the Lorde saith, take hede that your hartes be not ouercom with surfetyng & drōkēnes. For whē the soul is deliuered frō to much eating & drinking, then doth it consider it selfe the better, & waieth in what case it standeth. For as a mā in a filthye glas seeth not him selfe such one as he is in deede, so likewise if he be ouerladen wyth to muche eating

Quest. e. xx vet. et n. de test.

Luke. xxi.

lynge and drinckynge, he thinc-
keth him selfe to be another man
ner of man then he is. Yea then
is hee prouoked vnto sensuali-
litie and filthye luste, moued vn-
to anger, puffed vp with pride, & 
stirred vnto letchery. In respecte
wherof the Apostle sayeth, be not
dronke wyth wyne, wherin is vn
Ephesi. v honest behauioure. But if the bo
dy be kept in order, and accusto-
med wyth fastyng, then doth the
soul know the better, with what
deuociō she ought to serue her re-
demer. Fastyng therfore is very
necessari. Hereunto pertaineth ẏ
In Gene. Home. ix. saying of S. Jhon goldē mouth.
Why we abstayne from meates. The abstinence fro meates is re-
ceiued for this purpose, ẏ it shuld
restrain the rigour & fearsnes of
ẏ flesh to make it obedient to the
spirit, euē as an horse is to his ke

per

Recon. T.



per. For he that fasteth, muste a-
boue all thinges refraine anger,
learne mekenes and gentlenes,
haue an hearte contrite, and such
one as may repel and put backe
vnclean concupiscences & lusts
He muste also set before his eies
alway the eye of the euerlastinge
iudge and ỹ iudgeing place that
canne not be corrupted. Againe
he muste by his monye be made
the better by distributing it to the
poore, & haue rule ouer it. He must
be liberal in geuing almes & re-
ceiue into his hart no euil against
his neighboure, as Esaye spea-
king in ỹ persõ of god saith: haue
I chosen this fast, sayth the lord:
Thoughe thou wrye aboute thy
necke lyke an hoope, and strow-
est vnder the sackeclothe and
ashes, yet wyll not I regard thy
fast saith the lord. What fast thẽ,

Esay. lviii

tell

tel me: Loſen, ſaith he, the bonds of the wicked bargaines, breake thy breade to the hongry, bringe the poze man that hath no houſe into thi houſe. If thou doeſt theſe theſe thinges, ſaith he, thē ſhal thy light breake foꝛth as ꝑ mozning light and thy health ſhal ſpꝛyng right ſhoꝛtly. Haſt thou now ſene (my welbeloued) what ꝑ true faſt is: Let vs loke vpō this faſt, and let vs not thincke, as many do, ꝑ faſtinge ſtandeth in this pointe, if we continewe without any din ner til it be night. S. Hierome al ſo ſaieth: Satietie oꝛ fulnes is to be exchewed euen of ꝑ moſt vyle meats. Foꝛ ther is nothing ꝑ ſo o= uerwhelmeth ꝑ mind, as a ful bel= lye. Thus haue we herd that the firſt & pꝛincipal vſe of faſtinge is to tame, chaſtiſe, ſubdue & moꝛtifi

the

Becon. T.



the fleſh, ẏ it reliſt not, but rather obei the rule of ẏ ſpirit as an hād maide, her maiſtres, or an horſſe hys keper. But this is to be cōſidered in our faſting, ẏ we do not with our vnmeaſurable faſts ſo make weake & feable the bodye, that it be hable to ſerue neyther God, nor our neighbour, nor yet our ſelues, & by this meanes vtterly quench the vſe & worckyng of the ſpirit, as we rede that many in times paſt haue done, ſuch faſts pleaſe not God. This commaūdement therfore of S Paul is to be obſerued in al our faſts, Make not prouiſiō, ſayth he, for the fleſh to fulfyl the luſtes of it. An horſſe that is tomuch delicately fed, caſteth his maſter, againe if he be kept to hongry, he fainteth in the mids of the iourney, & doth not his office. I meane ther

A Rule to bee obſerued in faſtyng.

Rom. xiii.

foꝛe is to be had as in fedinge of the hoꝛsse, so likewise in oꝛdering of the bodye. We lyue not to eat, but we eate to lyue.

## ¶ The.xx. Chapter.

To fast to gyue vnto the pooꝛe.

THe seconde cause whye wee ought to vse fastinge is, that we abstaining from meates, maye haue to giue vnto the poꝛe and hongry the moꝛe liberallye. Foꝛ this kind of fasting pleaseth God greatly, when he seeth that we haue so put on the bowels of tender mercy & are led with such and so harty compassion toward our poꝛe neighbour, that we can not finde in our hearte he shulde want, yea rather then he shoulde lacke, we wil spare it out of oure own belli & giue it him, god right wel accepteth this fast, and bles=seth the faster wyth plentye and abundaunce, as the wiseman saith

He

## of Fastynge.

He that hath pitie on the poore, maketh the Lord his debter, and loke what he layeth oute, it shal bee payed hym agayne. Unto thys manner of fastynge dothe God exhorte vs by the Prophet, where he saieth, breake thi bread to the hongrye, and lede the neadye and wayefaringe men into thyne house. Whē thou seest a naked man, couer him, and despyse not thi flesh. What it is to breake thy bread to the hongri, we heard afore in the. xiii. chapter. The angell of God tolde Thobye, that when fastinge prayer and almes deedes go together, that is good and accepted in the Lordes sight It is written in a certaine boke called Pastor (the author wherof they say Hermas. S. Pauls disciple was) on thys manner: On that daye that thou shalte faste,

Prouer. xix.

Esay. lviii.

Tobye. xii.

Hermas S. Paules Dyscyple.

thou shalt taste nothing at al but bread and water, & whē thou hast coūted the quantitye of the meat that thou wast wont to eat on the other daies, the cost ỹ thou shuldest make on that daye that thou fastest lay it vp, & giue it to the widow, to the fatherles chiloe, or to the poore mā, and so shalt thou fast a good fast, that he which hath receiued it of the, may fil his soule, and that his praier may go vnto the lord for the. If thou fulfillest thy fast on this māner, as I commaund the, thy sacrifice shalbe acceptable to the Lorde, and thy fast shalbe written in the boke of life. Origen saithe, we finde in a certaine boke, that the Apostles saide, blessed is he that fasteth to thys ende, that he maye nourishe the poore man. The fast of suche one is wonderfully accepted be-

Marks & folow.

In Leui. Cap. vi. Home. x.

A notable sentence.

fore

Becon. T.



fore God. Hereto pertaineth the sayinge of. S. Austen, mercy dyd commende and greatly setforthe the praier and fastinge of Cornelius. For hee beinge ryche and a wealthye man fasted. He dyd not onlye faste, but he also fed them that wanted, that theyr fulnesse myghte make his faste accceptable. Agayne in a nother place he sayeth, before all thynges, that whyche we were wonte to eate at our dynner, on the fastyng daies let vs bestowe it on the poore. Oure goulden mouthed Doctoure in a certayne homilie counselleth vs, that when so euer wee faste, we should be lyberall to the poore, and gyue theym largelye of oure goods. In a nother place he also sayeth, he that eateth hys meate and is not hable to fast, let hym geue the larger almes, lette

Quest. C. xx.

Actes. x.

Serm. lvi de tempo.

In Gene. Home. vii.

Home. ix. In Gene.

him be the more diligent in prai-
ing, let him haue the more feruēt
desyre to heare the word of God.
Here Chrisostome estemeth al-
messe among other vertues of so
hie price, that if ther be ani which
can not abyde to fast for ẏ weak
nes of theyr bodye, yet if they be
plenteous in doinge the workes
of mercye and in prayinge and
hearing the worde of God, they
are not refused of god, but accep
ted as good Christians. Mercye
therfore and almes is a precious
thinge in the sighte of God, and
ought to be exercised of the faith
ful, when so euer occasion is ge-
uen whether they faste or not.
Toby xii Mercye, saieth the aungell, is
better then to hoorde vppe trea-
sures of golde. For mercye dely-
uereth frō death clense the sin, & 
causeth to find euerlasting life.

Thus

Becon.,T.



Thus haue wee hearde that Christen menne oughte to vse theyr faste vnto thys ende, that they abstaynynge frome meate and drincke, mighte haue wherof to geue the more abundantlye to the poore, to feede the hungrye, to clothe the naked, to relieue the sicke, to healpe the endebted, and to comforte the neadye. O blessed are they that so faste. But wher are they, and we shall commende them, and call them blessed? For great and commendable thynges dooe suche woorcke amonge theyr neyghboures and Christen brethren.

Kara auis in terris.

## ¶ The. xxi. Chapter.

Thirdly if we wyll vse fasting aryghte, we must vse it vnto this ende also, that by the dilygent doing and often exercyse

Fasting to serue prayer.

therof we may be made the more apte to praye and to lifte vp oure heartes vnto the Lord our God with feruent praiers, humble supplications, and heartye thankes geuinge. For vnto this ende serued fasting in times past, as dyuers hiſtories of the holye ſcripture do declare. If anye myſtortune or greuous plage chaunced at any time to the people of god, then ſtreightwaies they fasted, as we reade in the boke of iudges. Again, if anye plage wer threatned thē by the Prophetes of god for theyr wyckednes, as we reade of the Niniuites, or if they perceiued anye great euyl to be at hand as wee reade in the hiſtories of the Iſraelites, of Ieholaphat, Judith, Eſther, &c. then fell they ſtraightwaies to faſtinge. And theyr faſtes wer taken vn-

Judi. xx.
Jonas. iii
1. Reg. vii.
ii. Para. xx
Judit. iiii. and. viii.
Eſther. iiii

Becon., T.



to this end, that they might humble theym selues in the syghte of God, and be made the more mete for to pray, & to swage the wrathe of God. Nether do we read, that anye solempne fast was proclaymed at any time, but it was done to this end, that the fasters might the more quietlye and frely serue god, and cal on his holy name, by feruent and cõtinual praier. And as we read this in the olde testamente, so lacke we not the likee xamples in the newe. Is it to bee doubted, but that oure sauyoure Chriſte in that time of his longe and solempne faſte ioyned to his faſte prayer? He without doute prayed vnto God hys father all that tyme, that by his preachinge whyche was at hande, manye myghte bee tourened from theyr vngodlynesse vnto the true wor-

Why the godly men vsed fastynge in times past

Mayth. iiii.

shippinge of God, from wickednes of life vnto innocencye of mã
Luke.ii. ners. We reade also that the godlye Matrone Anne serued God in the temple wyth fastynge and prayer both day and night. The Apostles likewise after Christes ascenciõ did alwaies ioin to their
Actes.xiii. and.xiiii. fastinge, praier. In like manner reade we of the vertuous manne
Actes.x. Cornelius, whiche ioined to hys fastinge bothe prayer and almes deede, And the aungel sayde vnto Thobye, prayer is good wyth
Toby.xii. fastinge. Esdras sayd lykewyse to the Jewes. We fasted & prayed vnto the lord, & we had good
i.Esdr.viii lucke. Quene Esther also sente
Esthe.iiii. woorde to Mardocheus, saying, gather together all the Jewes, and praye for me, but se that ye neither eat nor dryncke.iii.daies and three nyghtes, and I wyth

my

Becon., T.



iny maides wyl fast & pray lyke-
wyse. Again Eliachim the priest
saied to ye children of Israel, whē
they were in greate sorowe and
danger of theyr enemyes. Be ye
sure, that the Lord wil hear your
petycyons if ye contynewe sted-
faste in fastynges and prayers
in the syghte of the Lorde. Thus
se we, that the godly people both
of the olde and of the new testa-
mente, ioined alwaies for ye most
part fasting and praier together,
thincking them selues thē to fast
wel, whē their faste was accōpai-
ned wyth prayer, as it is wrytten,
prayer is good with fastinge. S.
Peter also saith, be ye sober and
watche vnto prayer.

Judit. iiii.

Toby. xii.
1. Pet. iiii.

## ¶ The. xxii. Chapter.

MOreouer our sauiour christ
also ioineth praier & fasting
together wherhe saith, this

Mat. xvii.

kynd

kynde of dyuels is not caste out
Mark .ix. but by fastyng & prayer. To thys
kind of fasting doth S. Paul ex-
ii. Cor. vi. hort vs whē he saith: let vs giue
no occasion of euil, that in our of-
fyce be found no faute, but in all
things let vs behaue our selues
as the ministers of God in much
pacience, in labours, in watch-
ings & fastings: Also S. Peter
i. Pet. iiii. Be ye sober, sayth he, and watch
vnto prayer. And from the con-
trari doth our sauiour Christ cal
vs away, saying: Take heede to
Luke. xxi. your selues, lest at any time your
herts be ouercom with surfeting
and dronkennes, & cares of thys
lyfe, and so the dai (of iudgemēt)
come on you vnwares. The pro-
phet Esay thoundereth agaynst
them, which despising this godly
maner of abstinence, set al their
minds on banketting and belly
chere.

Becon., T.



there. Wo be vnto thē sayth he: that rise vp early to folow dron= kennes, and to them that conty= nue so vntyl nyght, and tyll they be set on fyre with wine. In those companies are harps and lutes, Tabrets and pipes & wyne. But they regard not ỹ work of ỹ lord. Agayne he saythe: Wo be vnto thē ỹ are strong to sup out wyne, & expert mē to set vp dronkēnes. These giue sentence with the vn godly for rewards, but cōdemne the iust cause of the ryghteouse. Therfore like as fyre licketh vp the straw, and as the flame con= sumeth the stuble, euen so theyr roote shalbe as corrupcion, and theyr blossom shal vanysh away like dust, for they haue cast awai the law of the Lord of hosts, and blasphemed the word of the ho= ly, maker of Israel. From beast= ly ban=

Elaye. v.

ly bāketting vnto faithful fastig & contynual calling on the name of the Lord doth the prophet Joel cal these belly goddes, saying,

Joel.i. Wake vp ye dr̄ōckards & weepe mourne al ye wine bibbers, & not without a cause. For he ỹ hath his bodye loden wyth meat & drinke is no more mete to prai vnto god then a dead mā is to tel a tale, ne ther can the minde of such one any more fly vnto god with heauēly desires, then a ship to much cūbred with burdens & at the point to sinck, can any lenger flote vpō of ỹ waters. We haue a prouerb no les true then commen amongys. When the belly is ful, the body wold be at reast, meaning that he, which hath enfarsed his belly with delicious meates and costious dricks, is more mete to slepe like a swine, thē to take any earnest,

A true and cōmō prouerbe.

Becon., T.



nest & weightī matter in hād. We haue not red saith. S. Cipzian, ỹ the godly men did euer take any great thing in hand, except they first fasted. So oft as they wēt about to obtain any thing of God, they fasted, & wept, and watched whole nightes in pzaier, & weare garmentes of heare next to their flesh, & so withal humblenes, desired god to be benificial to thē. Nether wanted they of their purpose whē they most hūbly fel down at the fete of god & offered vnto him the sacrifice of a contrite hart, but god was neare vnto them, ỹ called on him, & reached forthe hys hand to them ỹ wer in daunger, & holpe thē that wer in trouble. Again he saieth, pzaier is of great vertue, whē fasting goeth afore. Basilius magnus saith also, ỹ fasting is necessari, when we desire to ob=

Ser. de tēt et ieiunio. Christi.

obtayne any thyng of the Lord

In regular Mona. Capi. l.

The aũcient fathers of Christes churche godly consideryng how necessary a thing praier is in the Church of Christ, ordayned certayne feastful daies in the yeare, on the whych the people shoulde resorte and come together vnto the temple for to praye vnto the Lord God. And that they myght come the more deuoutely & pray wyth the greater fruite, they appointed also that the daye before the solemne feast, they shuld fast that they myght be the more apt to pray, whẽ they come together into the temple. For wher the body is burdened wyth meate, ther the mynde can haue no free passage vnto God. Let thẽ therfore that fast, appointe their fastynge also to thys vse, that by theyr abstinence they may be the more re

Why fastes wer apointed of ẏ fathers of Christs Church.

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pray, & not only to prepare themselues to pray, but also earnestly to gyue theyr mindes vnto prayer, or els what doth theyr fast profit them? To faste from meat and to goo about worldlye matters, what other thing is it, then a mocking of God, & a derision of christen abstinence as. S. Ambrose saith, doest ỹ thincke ỹ he fasteth aright, whiche waking betymes in the morning goeth not vnto ỹ church (to pray & to hear the word of god) but as sone as he is vp, gathereth together hys seruauntes laieth abrode his nets, bryngeth forth his dogs, & goeth running about the forestes? Therefore if we faste, lette vs faste a ryghte, and after the examples of the auncyente holye fathers lette vs alwaye couple prayer wyth our fastinge. So shall boothe we, oure Ambrose.

faſtes & our prayers pleaſe God.

## The.xxiii.Chapter.

Furthelye and finally foraſ-
muche as the word of God is
the ſinguler and vnſpeakea-
ble gift of God, geuen of him to
be a lantarne to oure feete and a
light to our pathwayes, to tourne
ſouls from idolatri vnto true god
lines, to giue wiſoom to the hum-
ble, to make the faithful penitent
heartes glad, to lighten the eies
of the ignorannt, to teach the true
relygyon, to improue errours
and hereſies, to amend ſinners, &
to inſtruct all degrees in righte-
ouſnes, that the man of God may
be perfect and prepared vnto all
good worckes: it is conueniente,
whither wee heare it of other or
reade it oure ſelues, that we both
heare and reade it wyth greate

Pſalm.cix.

Pſal.cix.

ii.Tim.iii.

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reuerence and all humilitie, seinge that not man, but the holye ghoste is the authoure of it, whiche breathed into the heartes of holye menne the knowledge of it, and putte in theyr myndes what they oughte to wyghte as. S. Paule sayeth, the whole scripture was geuen of God by inspiracion. And. S. Peter recordeth the same, sayinge. The scripture came neuer by the wyl of manne, but holye men of God spake, as they wer moued by ỹ holy ghost. If the holye scripture then commeth frō god, & god be the authoz of it, who dare presume either to heare oz to reade it, but wyth an humble reuerence and reuerent humilitie? As. S. Austen sayeth, by the bookes of the holye scripture God hym self and oure lord speaketh vnto vs, and sheweth

ii. Tim. iii.

ii. Peter. i.

Ad Julianum, ep. c. xi.

vnto the effecte of a godlye wyll, Let vs then consider and marke well, with what honoure the message of that god and Lord ought to be receiued of vs. What if a message came vnto vs very earlye in the mornyng from a kyng, wold we not streight waies (al other cares laied aside) receiue the letters with a readye wil & withal deuociō, and after we had red theym, laboure to fulfill the kynges request to ẏ vttermoste. And beholde from the heauen of heauens the Kynge of kynges and Lorde of Lordes, yea and our redemer hathe vouched safe to dyrecte hys letters vnto vs by the Prophetes and Apostles, not that hee shoulde commytte vnto vs anye seruyce necessarye for hym, but sygnifye, what thynges maye dooe vs good vnto salua-

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tion and glorye. O wyth what reuerence and greate honoure oughte we then to receiue, reade or heare the letters of thys euerlastinge king and immortal god sente for oure glorye and for our saluation, seing that by them not man, but God speaketh vnto vs as oure sauioure Christe testifieth, he that heareth you (he speaketh of the preachers of goddes worde) heareth me, & he that despyseth you, despiseth me, & he that despiseth me, despiseth hym that sent me. Now ỹ we may come reuerētly & humblye to the hearinge of gods worde, it shal not be vnfitting to vse our fast vnto this end also, that we maye come vnto it with fasting & empty stomackes, that oure mynde and inwarde mā mai haue the purer senses to vnderstande, the cleare sighte to Luke. x.

beholde, the more open eares to heare, and the greater stomacks to digest the holi misteries of god For likewise as he is no mete mā to pray vnto God, that commeth out of the Tauern sweating and sit on fire with drincking of whot wine & eatig of delicious meats, so in like maner is he no fit man either to reade or to hear ỹ word of god, that hath a ful gorge and stuffed belly. The more the body is filled, the more is the mind dulled, & made vnapt to receiue any message from god. But albeit ỹ outward man decay & be made feble for a tyme, yet the inwarde man is renewed day by day, and made strong. And this meant the holy fathers & godlye bishops of Christes churche in tymes paste, when they appointed fastinge on the eues of solempne feastes, that

2. Cor. iiii.

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the people by their fasting might be made the more apt the day folowing, when they came to the temple, to heare the blessed worde of their saluacion.

The holy letters do testify, that when Moses receiued the law, he was in the mount with God, and fasted .xl. daies and .xl. nights before the tables of the law were deliuered vnto him, whereof wee maye learne howe reuerently we ought to take the word of God, and not to come vnto it with vnwashed fete, as they vse to say. And this is to be noted by ỹ way, that as Moses fasting was foũd worthy to receiue the law of god, so likewise when he came downe from the mount & saw the people droncke and mad, singinge & piping, dauncing & leaping, he threw downe the tables of ỹ law, & brake

Exo. xxiiii

Welly besides are not mete to receiue the woorde of God.

Exo. xxxii

them on peces, by this declaring that Epicures and belly gods be no worthy and mete vessels to receiue the new wine of gods word

ij. Esd. ix. When the children of Israell at a certaine time came together to read the boke of the Lord, they fasted the whole day, that they might reade the holye scriptures with the more reuerēce and bee made the more mete to haue the holy ghost present with them to teache them by hys godlye inspiracion.

iiii. Esd. v. Esdras also being greatly desirous to haue certaine secretes opened vnto him, was commaunded of Uriel the angel to fast. viii daies first of al. Which thing he did, and had hys desyre satisfied.

Dan. ix. x In like manner after the Prophet Daniel had fasted and prayed vnto the Lord for knowledge

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of certain misteries, Gabriel the aungell of God came and reue= led vnto him the secretes of Chri stes incarnatiō, passion, death. &c

When Baruche red hys boke before the kinge and the kinges councell and before all the peo= ple, they all wepte fasted & pray= ed before the Lorde. Baruch. i.

Before that oure sauyoure Christe tooke vppon hym the of= fice of preachinge to declare vn= to the people the toyfull tidinges that he broughte frome heauen, he fasted. xl. daies and. xl. nights and dyd eate nothinge at all, ge= uinge vs example by his fasting not to faste the like fast, which is impossible and aboue ỹ natural strengthes of ani mā, but to come vnto the word of god thorow fa= sting with al reuerence & humili tie, whither we reade or heare it. Math. iiii.

The

Actes i.ii. The Apostles of Christ lykewise before they vniuersally preached the kyngdom of Christ, fasted and praied, and as they were fastyng and prayinge, the holye Ghoste came downe vpon them and endued them with the knowledge of al languages, & taught them the true vnderstandynge of Gods holy misteries.

Actes.x. To ende, Cornelius being very desirous to knowe ỳ true and approued religiõ before God, fasted & praied vnto the Lord, and God graciously satisfied his desire.

## The.xxiiii. Chapter.

We muste come to the woorde of God for true scripture.

Thus le we that all godlye men both of the old and new Testament vsed abstinence for the most part, whe they shuld eyther preach, heare or read the woorde of God, that they myghte come the more reuerentlye vnto it,

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st, and be made the more mete to handle so holye and worthye misteries. It is conueniēt therfore ẏ we also, if we wyll vse fastinge aright, do folowe the examples of these holi men, whensoeuer we entende eyther to preache, reade or heare the worde of God, and not vnreuerentlye to come vnto the holy scripture, as vnto prophane wrightings, after the example of many vngodly parsons which w̄ out al humilitie & reuerēce read the woorde of god as thoughe it wer an Ethnike chronicle, a boke of mannes statutes, of Beuise of Hampton, of Gye of Warwicke, of Robinhoode, and suche other lyke fonde and foolyshe fansyes yea ther wāt not (the greater shal be our plage) which scorn ẏ word of god and moste shamefullye abuse it, some vnto skoffynge and

Abusers of the worde of God.

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testing, some vnto the tauntinge of other, some vnto ỹ vpholdig of their fleshly liberty & corrupt mañers, some vnto the maintenining of wicked opinions. &c. whose destruccion slepeth not, whose damnacion is at hand. For if it be not lawful to cast pearles before hogs nor to gyue that is holy to dogs, nether is it lawful for hogges to touch pearles, nor dogs to taste ỹ is holi. If thei wer punished that did eate vnleuended bread at the feast of the passeouer, if Uza wer striken vnto ỹ death for touching the arcke, if that geast ỹ came vn to the maryage not hauinge the wedding garmente, was bounde hand and feete, and cast into vtter darcknes, wher weping and gnashinge of teethe is, if the Corinthes wer plaged for abusinge the lords supper, let not those swi-

Math. vii.

Exodi. xii.

ii. Reg. vi.

Math. xxii.

i. Corin. xi

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nish Epicures, doggish papistes Licencious Libertines, vngodly Anabaptistes, grosse gospellers and wicked worldlinges thincke that they shal escape vnpunished if they go forth to abuse the word of god or to come vnreuerentlye vnto it. For the holye scripture is the message of god, brought vnto vs from heauen by his holy Embassadoures the Prophetes & Apostles yea by his own dearly beloued sonne that kinge of glory, which sealed & confirmed it with the sheding of his most precious blud: it may not therfore be lightly regarded, nor vnreuerētli hādled. For if he ỹ despyseth Moses Hebru x. law, saith. S. Paul, dieth woute mercy vnder .ii. or .iii. wytnesses, how much sorer, suppose ye, shal he be punished, which tredeth vnder fote the son of god & counteth

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the blud of the Testament, wher with he was sanctifyed, as an vnholy thyng, and doth dishonoure to the spirit of Grace.

That we therfore maye humbly, reuerētly deuotely & honorably come vnto the preachyng, hearing or reading of the blessed word of God, let vs not neglecte thys noble vertue of fasting, but after the exāple of the aforesayd godly men prepare our selues by the diligent exercise therof, to be mete to handle so holye and heauenly misteries. By this meanes shal it come to passe, ỹ god which is the author of the holi scripture shal alwaye be present wyth vs by hys holy spirit, and teache vs the true knowledge of hys godly wyl, vnto the glory of his blessed name, the profit of hys holye congregacion, and the syngular com-

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comfort of our conscience.

Nowe haue we hearde fyrste what the true and Christen faste is. Secondly, how we oughte to fast. Thyrdlye, what the true vse of fasting is. It remayneth that we be not lyke that negligēt seruaunt whych knoweth hys masters wyl, and doth it not, wherfore is beatē wyth many stripes, but rather that we be likened vnto that good seede whyche bryngeth forth her encrease, some an hūdred fold, some threscore fold, som thirty fold. If we now know the true doctrine of the holy scripture concerning fasting, lette vs practise it in oure conuersacion, when so euer any such occasyon is offered, as heretofore is declared, and at all tymes let vs lyue soberlye, ryghteoullye and godlye in thys prelente worlde.

The conclusion of the booke.

Luke. xii.

Math. xiii

Titus. ii.

Le

Lette vs not with the abuse caste waye the vse, but let vs so muche the more gladly exercise the godly manner of fasting, because the vngodlye papistes rayle on vs, & cõtinnally beat into the symple peoples heades, ỹ we which professe the gospel, abhorre and condempne all fastynge and prayeinge, all cõmendable customes & godlye ordinaunces, that by well doing we may stop the mouthes of foolish and ignoraũt men, and that they, which backebite vs as euil doers, maye se our good workes and praise God in the day of visitacion, to whome be all honour and glory for euer and euer

1. Peter. ii.

C Giue the glory to God alone.

C Imprynted at London by Iohn Day, dwellyng ouer Alderisgate. These bookes are to bee solde at the shop at the lyttle Conduyte in Cheapesyde.

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